Western Europe

GREAT BRITAIN

THE YEAR under review (July 1, 1952, through June 30, 1953), which saw the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, was one of extraordinary internal political tranquility in Great Britain. The coronation, which took place on June 3, 1953, united British peoples of all faiths, colors, and politics in a great demonstration of loyalty to the sovereign. The Jewish community was represented at the ceremony by its spiritual head, Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie. Special commemorative services took place in all synagogues, with a new form of prayer composed for the occasion. A committee headed by Lord Samuel, Lord Nathan, and Sigmund Gestetner conducted a campaign for a Queen Elizabeth Coronation Forest in Lower Galilee in Israel. All the Jewish communities of the British Commonwealth took part.

Economic Conditions

There was a general easement of the British economic situation, indicated by the strengthened value of the pound sterling throughout the world and the continued prosperity of Great Britain's export trade. The clothing and textile industries, in which a large section of the Jewish community was engaged, shared in the general improvement. Chancellor of the Exchequer Richard A. Butler's policy of removing subsidies on foods and at the same time lessening direct and indirect taxes, while contested by the Labor Opposition, was nevertheless generally approved.

There was, however, a grave crisis in the jewelry, silverware, and related industries, largely due to the 100 per cent purchase tax in effect since World War II. According to one estimate, published in The [London] Jewish Chronicle of April 3, 1953, 75 per cent of the jewelry manufacturers and wholesalers, and diamond merchants, and about 25 per cent of the craftsmen, many of them Continental refugees who settled in Britain after the two world wars, were Jewish.

Jewish Population

Anglo-Jewry, including the community in Northern Ireland, consisted in 1953 of approximately 450,000 persons, about nine-tenths of one per cent of the total population. Some 280,000 Jews lived in Greater London, the
rest being dispersed over 100 other towns. Immigration, emigration, and intercity movement were negligible. The number of Jews serving in the armed forces was about 3,300, half of them being stationed in overseas commands. The bulk of Jewish householders in Great Britain were members of synagogues, most of which were represented on the Board of Deputies. The community was thus organizationally a centralized, recognizable unit in Great Britain, exercising considerable influence upon its sister communities throughout the commonwealth.

**Discrimination and Anti-Semitism**

The almost complete eclipse of the Fascist Union Movement had been shown in the provincial municipal elections in May 1952, when Jeffrey Hamm, as the group's lone candidate, polled 90 votes in Manchester against the Labor candidate's 3,277 and the Conservative candidate's 2,985. Although its membership was estimated at less than 100, the Union Movement continued to hold outdoor meetings, mainly in Salisbury and Portsmouth. Sir Oswald Mosley made one of his rare public statements of recent years in a letter to The *Manchester Guardian* on August 17, 1953, in which he described Werner Naumann's arrest by the British as "traversing several principles of British justice." (For a full account of the Naumann case, see p. 240-43.)

Individuals and minor groups continued to circulate anti-Semitic matter. These included the Britons Publishing Company (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 234), and a body of Nazi sympathizers in Suffolk and Lancashire who styled themselves Natinform (National Information Bureau). They distributed the publications of Einar Aberg and Gerald L. K. Smith, as well as what purported to be an extract from the diaries of James V. Forrestal, former United States Secretary of Defense. In October 1952 the Royal Society of Musicians refused to administer a legacy left by John Archibald of Kent amounting to £22,000 ($62,800) to benefit destitute musicians "not Jewish or Hebrew by descent or religion."

**"Observer" Trust**

The London *Evening Standard* drew attention in October 1952 to a clause in the Trust Deeds and Articles of Association of The [Sunday] *Observer*, an important weekly of liberal opinion, to the effect that only a Protestant could be a trustee, director, the editor, or business manager of the paper. The *Observer* had been owned by Lord Astor until 1945 when he vested ownership in a trust, of which he himself was a member. Supported by The [London] *Jewish Chronicle*, The *Evening Standard* vigorously attacked the clause as writing into the newspaper's constitution a principle of religious discrimination. The *Observer*, defending itself editorially, pointed out that Jews and Catholics did fill important appointments on the paper, and that the purpose of the clause in question was to ensure that The *Observer* "would be conducted as an independent newspaper, owing allegiance to no sectional organization with special interests, whether religious or political."
Persons carrying ultimate responsibility for the paper's conduct and policy should be broadly representative of the religious outlook of Britain as a Protestant country. . . . " The Observer contended that The Evening Standard had raised the question in pursuit of a feud conducted by the Beaverbrook press against The Observer.

CHATHAM HOUSE INCIDENT

There was a more satisfactory conclusion to a discussion opened by The Jewish Observer and Middle East Review on certain sections in George Kirk's The Middle East and the War, published in December 1952 by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), of which the author was a permanent official. The Jewish Observer editor, Jon Kimche, drew attention in its December 1952 issue to a large number of offensive passages in the work which were not merely anti-Zionist interpretations of recent history, but also thinly veiled anti-Semitic caricatures of well-known Jewish personalities. Professor Arnold Toynbee, the head of Chatham House, withdrew the book for revision. Kirk subsequently resigned his duties as its Middle East expert.

Community Organization

The Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Anglo-Jewish Association, and the British section of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) made no headway toward securing greater coordination in the expression of Anglo-Jewish viewpoints or in avoiding overlapping of functions. The Anglo-Jewish Association was still without representation on the Board, and the Board itself continued to refuse a long-standing invitation to affiliate with the WJC.

The Board continued to be the dominant voice of Jewish public opinion. A resolution passed on July 20, 1952, expressed grave concern at the signing of the contractual agreement between the Western occupying powers and the German Federal Republic, and at the same time called for a peaceful settlement of outstanding differences between East and West. Each of the three bodies put their anxiety for the situation of Jews behind the Iron Curtain before the British authorities. The most impressive pronouncement on this subject was that of the Chief Rabbi, who broadcast a protest over the British Broadcasting Corporation's European Service on January 18, 1953. The Communist organ, The London Daily Worker, attacked the Chief Rabbi with its customary bitterness. That paper devoted much of its space during the year to its version of the Jewish situation in Eastern Europe. One Communist leader, Ivor Montagu, was especially prominent in his attacks upon Jewish leaders who, he told a meeting on February 2, 1953, "were swallowing slanderous stories and monstrous falsehoods circulated by the American Secret Service." The Communist Party, however, admitted the resignation of a considerable number of Jewish members.

The foreign affairs committee of the Board of Deputies expressed its regret that, at the ninth session of the United Nations Commission on Human
Rights, the British government, together with the other great powers, had opposed granting individuals and organizations the right to petition in cases of violation of human rights.

The second conference of Jewish communities of the British Commonwealth and Empire, scheduled for 1953, was postponed for one year to avoid clashing with the biennial conference of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. This assembly was attended by Abraham Cohen, the British Board's president.

INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

The Council of Christians and Jews, which spent £7,300 ($20,840) on interfaith activities during the twelve months ended December 1952, was granted the patronage of the Queen in November of that year. As part of its coronation period program, the World Congress of Faiths (whose president was Viscount Samuel) held Faiths of the Commonwealth services in many towns. The Board of Deputies' own interfaith agency, the Central Jewish Lecture Committee, was responsible for 485 lectures, mostly concerned with group relations, delivered throughout Great Britain in 1952, as compared with 500 the previous year.

TEXTBOOK SURVEY

The results of a textbook survey undertaken by the Council of Christians and Jews (see American Jewish Year Book, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 236) were made known at the second Textbook Survey conference of the Council on May 17, 1953. One hundred and fourteen history textbooks for children of the ages between eleven and fifteen had been examined. The survey found that: only a few textbooks worked against the promotion of good human relations, among them "cram" books, which did scant justice to minority groups about which "no questions are likely to be asked"; in the treatment of religion, authors found it most difficult to be free from unconscious bias, and often ignored certain cultural and religious groups (e.g., Jews and Moslems) who had made important contributions to European civilization; the Gospel story was rarely treated in its historical context or related to the earlier history of the Jewish people; and the frequent incidence of unscientific, emotive terms, like "native," "foreign," and "British race," might tend to harden existing prejudices.

The report found that, in general, insufficient attention had been paid in the books examined to the contributions of immigrant and other minority groups. During the subsequent discussion, several speakers referred to the need to examine Scripture textbooks. It was suggested that the teaching of the crucifixion created a permanent bias in the mind of the child. The Council resolved to continue its work along the same lines, and to investigate, inter alia, songbooks and Scripture books.

Religious Activities

There were two contrasting items of religious news during the period under review: a report highlighting the insufficiency of new candidates for
the ministry in Britain, and the inauguration of a Sefardi Rabbinical College, to serve the North African communities. The United Synagogue, England's main synagogal body, found that the six candidates for the ministry, deemed the annual minimum requirement for Britain's needs, were not forthcoming. Among the reasons given for the dearth of potential British rabbis was the lack of a suitable training college. The Jews' College appeal for £200,000 ($560,000) to construct a fully equipped residential college launched in 1951 had by June 1953 reached £60,000 ($168,000). The appeal was then extended to the commonwealth countries, principally Australia and South Africa, each of which looked to Britain to fulfill part of its requirements in spiritual leaders.

The leaders of the Sefardi community in London provided the establishment of the new rabbinical college—in Ramsgate, Kent—as well as some of the finances from their Montefiore Endowment. The Ramsgate College, inaugurated on June 15, 1953, was to train forty students in a three-year course.

The chief rabbi ruled, in a letter to the officers of the United Synagogue in July 1952, that for the present the Ashkenazic pronunciation must be retained for divine services in Britain. The innate conservatism of Anglo-Jewish religious practices was further emphasized in August 1952, when fifteen Orthodox congregations in Manchester replied to the measures devised by that city's communal rabbi and his colleagues, and sanctioned by the chief rabbi, for "increasing the devotion and decorum at services" by forming themselves into a Committee to Fight Reform.

SAUNDERSON CASE

In an action for libel brought by Benjamin Saunderson, a butcher, against members of the Beth Din (Ecclesiastical Court) and The Jewish Chronicle, judgment was given with costs for the defendants. The hearing, which lasted for eight days, in April 1953, concerned an announcement inserted by the Beth Din in The Chronicle that the plaintiff was not licensed to sell kosher meat. He claimed damages, and asked for an injunction restraining repetition by the defendants of the offending statements. The complicated case was considered an important test case for the Beth Din, and the judge, in his summing up, found that the announcement was made on a privileged occasion. Nevertheless, though the decision recognized the proceedings of the Beth Din as having judicial sanction, the case brought to light major defects in the administration of the Beth Din. The workings of the court burdened the chief rabbi and the dayanim (judges) with a wide range of ritual and religious matters, besides the function of an arbitration tribunal in civil disputes. It was revealed during the Saunderson case that the institution's records were inadequate, and that there were no firm rules of court. The religious authorities eventually decided to institute an inquiry into the workings of the Beth Din; at the time of this writing (August 1953) no investigation committee had yet been nominated.

VALIDITY OF JEWISH DIVORCE

A woman was refused a divorce on the ground of desertion by Mr. Commissioner (Henry Broome Durley) Grazebrook in the London Divorce Court
on March 25, 1953.¹ She had been previously granted a divorce by the Beth Din, and though this was not valid under English law, the commissioner held that it did constitute an act of consent to living apart, and therefore the wife could not establish desertion by her husband. A later case, heard in the London Divorce Court on June 14, 1953, resulted in a declaration by Mr. Justice (Sir Edward Holroyd) Pearce that a Beth Din bill of divorcement could be valid under English law.² His conclusion was based on the fact that the husband of the wife making the application was domiciled in Israel, and therefore this form of divorce was the only one valid for a person of the Jewish faith resident in that country.

Jewish Education

Statistics illustrating the decline in Jewish education were offered by S. S. Levin, of the Central Council of Jewish Religious Education, in February 1953. These indicated that 40 per cent of Jewish children of school age were attending Hebrew classes in London in 1953, as compared with 50 per cent in 1935, 64 per cent in 1923, and over 70 per cent in 1911. In the smaller communities, the situation was brighter: In 1953, the proportion of Jewish children of school age attending Hebrew classes was 33.3 in Manchester, 40 per cent in Leeds, 58 per cent in Glasgow, and as high as 91 per cent in Birmingham.

After a year of acrimonious discussion, the dispute regarding a policy for Jewish day-school development (see American Jewish Year Book, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 236-37) was no nearer solution. The chief rabbi had notified the Ministry of Education of his agreement to the pooling of trust funds for the erection of a new Jewish grammar school and the improvement of existing schools. These funds were endowments controlled by the London Board of Jewish Religious Education which had been formerly employed to administer schools, since closed down by war conditions. This scheme was being contested by the highly Orthodox Jewish Secondary Schools Movement. As the Ministry of Education was reluctant to sanction a scheme supported by those with access to the funds, but opposed by the governing body of the existing day schools, an impasse had been reached.

Adult Education

The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, in association with the Jewish Agency's Diaspora Education Department, continued to be the sole body concerned with adult education in secular Hebrew subjects. Seminars, conducted by visiting Israel scholars, were frequent. The British Council, a government-sponsored body, awarded several scholarships to Israelis for study in Britain, while John Goodenday, a London businessman, gave a large endowment to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to provide frequent interchanges of students between the two countries.

¹ Joseph v. Joseph
² Har Shefi v. Har Shefi
The elevation of the Israel Legation in Britain to the status of an embassy in August 1952 may have arisen from strictly political motives in the Middle East, but it was received with gratification by the Anglo-Jewish community. But the sale to Arab states of jet aircraft on a scale to put Israel woefully behind in the Middle East arms race led to disquiet, by no means confined to Zionists and their supporters, but also shared by many other Jewish bodies, many Conservative members of Parliament, the Liberal and the Labor opposition. Prime Minister Winston Churchill was forced to state, in a foreign affairs debate on May 11, 1953, that “nothing we shall do in the supply of aircraft to this part of the world will be allowed to place Israel at an unfair disadvantage.” A probable indication of the government’s view on the internationalization of Jerusalem issue was The [London] Times editorial on August 4, 1953, supporting the de facto situation in Jerusalem.

In Britain there was little controversy about Israel’s pressing invitation to English-speaking Jews to immigrate there. This, and the need to learn Hebrew, were the dominant themes of Zionist pronouncements during the year. There were three organized emigration “levels” in existence in 1953: professional and technical immigrants belonging to the 400-strong Professional and Technical Workers Aliya (PATWA) organization, of whom 85 emigrated in the year ended July 1953; pioneer immigrants (chalutzim), of whom about 100 left during the year; and Shnat Sherut, inaugurated in 1951 and seeking candidates to give “a year of service” to Israel—100 persons had served their year in Israel since the scheme’s inception. Six hachshara agricultural training centers were maintained in Britain, four by the Zionist Federation and two, for religious chalutzim, by the Bachad Fellowship.

By far the most impressive Zionist demonstration of the year was London Jewry’s memorial meeting for the late President Chaim Weizmann of Israel, presided over by Sir Simon Marks, which filled Albert Hall to capacity.

**Fund Raising**

The national Joint Palestine Appeal campaign for Israel was inaugurated on March 1, 1953. By July 1953 it had reached a total of £1,100,000 ($3,080,000), so that campaign chairman J. Edward Sieff estimated that the Appeal would conclude at the previous year’s level. Other Israel appeals, such as Youth Aliyah, Hebrew University, and Magen David Adom, were conducted separately and continued to attract generous support.

**Cultural Activities**

The first fruits of the work of the Jewish Book Council (founded in 1949) was the Jewish Book Week, held from November 22-28, 1952. There were meetings and exhibitions in London and the provinces, as well as a special literary supplement of The Jewish Chronicle.

Unfortunately the literary display was restricted in scope, and historical rather than contemporary. Many of the books published during the year
under review by writers of Jewish parentage did not qualify for inclusion.
Chief among those books with Jewish associations were: My Dear Timothy, first volume of an autobiographical series by Victor Gollancz; The Loving Brothers, by Louis Golding; The Morning Will Come, by Naomi Jacob; A Stranger Here, by Robert Henriques; The Human Kind, by Stanley Baron; Harold Laski, by Kingsley Martin; Israel, by Norman Bentwich; The Naked Lady, by Bernard Falk; The Land System in Palestine, by A. Granott; Learning Laughter, by Stephen Spender; and Two Studies in Virtue, by Christopher Sykes.

Noteworthy exhibitions at the Ben Uri Art Gallery were of Ketubot (marriage licenses) arranged by Cecil Roth; of paintings; and of the achievements of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A televised performance by the British Broadcasting Corporation of S. Anski's Dybbuk gave the entire nation an opportunity of seeing a classic drama of Jewish literature.

Personalia

Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie went on an official Passover visit to Israel in 1953. Sir Leon Simon returned from Israel in May 1953, relinquishing his post as president of the Post Office Bank of Israel. Jacques Maleh, the Cairo correspondent of The [London] Jewish Chronicle, was expelled from Egypt without an official reason on May 9, 1953.

Rabbis Maurice Lew and Abraham Rapaport were appointed dayanim of the London Beth Din in December 1952, while Frank M. Samuel was elected president of the United Synagogue in June 1953.

The community lost two outstanding figures during 1952-53. Sir Robert Waley Cohen had been president of the United Synagogue and a former vice president of the Board of Deputies. Though strongly anti-Zionist, he was head of large enterprises involved in the economic development of Palestine and later Israel. The death of Sir Montague Burton robbed British industry of one of its most enlightened leaders, who was also one of the most generous benefactors of British scholarship.

Barnet Litvinoff

FRANCE

The year under review saw growing internal dissatisfaction with government policies and grave difficulties in North Africa and Indo-China, as well as a need for fundamental decisions on France's role in the European Defense Community. The government of Premier Antoine Pinay, whose "save the franc" deflationary policy had aroused considerable enthusiasm in many quarters for a while, fell in the autumn of 1952. His successor, René Mayer, fell as soon as he presented a program calling for action. From May 21 to the end of June 1953 France was without a government, as Parliament could not agree on a chief to head France's eighteenth cabinet since the end of the war. Finally, in June 1953 the Chamber of Deputies chose a conserva-
tive, Joseph Laniel, who had been a top resistance leader during the war years. It gave him the power to undertake fairly important internal reforms by administrative decree.

However, the introduction of the Laniel government's first set of decree reforms in August 1953 set off France's most serious labor upheaval since the Popular Front days of 1936. Postal services and communications, the railways and the mines, gas, electricity, and public transport were all shut down, virtually paralyzing the country, until modification by the government of its decrees affecting civil service workers brought about an uneasy truce with labor. In Morocco, the French banished Sidi Mohammed Ben Youssuf, the Sultan who had reigned for twenty-five years, and who had now aligned himself with the nationalist-minded Istiqlal movement seeking greater Moroccan independence. He was replaced by Moulay Mohammed Ben Arafa, a figurehead chosen by the powerful Berber pasha, Thami El Glaoui. The latter was a staunch ally of French colonists who, thanks to the change, had been consolidating their power in Morocco. Truce in Korea left France the only power still engaged in a major war with Communist forces, in Indo-China; this struggle, bleeding the country of money and military manpower, was daily becoming more unpopular. The need to send more troops from France to southeast Asia added to French reluctance to take any decision on the treaties calling for the establishment of a German army, even as part of a common Western European defense force. Failure of the French to act imposed a strain on Franco-American relations.

The combination of crises facing France at home and abroad, and government ineptitude in handling them, provoked considerable popular disgust and sentiment for a drastic change. In the political turmoil of the year under review, two Jews figured prominently. One of them, René Mayer, was premier for some months. The other, Pierre Mendes-France, achieved a considerable reputation while making an unsuccessful bid to head the French government. Le Monde, one of France's leading newspapers, declared that some anti-Semitic sentiment played a role both in Mayer's fall and Mendes-France's defeat. In both cases, however, this was definitely a very minor consideration; and it had to be evaluated against the much more important fact that men who were Jewish could and did achieve the country's highest executive post. The anti-Semitic weeklies in France, Rivarol and Aspects de la France, attacked both men vigorously, and often grossly. Otherwise, the Jewishness of the two men provoked no particular comment in the French press. Other Jews important in French political life during the year were the Socialist Daniel Mayer, chairman of the Chamber of Deputies' foreign affairs committee, and Jules Moch, former Minister of the Interior and a French delegate at the United Nations (UN). Another UN delegate was René Cassin, president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, one of France's leading judicial figures.

Jewish Affairs

July 1952-July 1953 was a hectic and turbulent year for the Jews in France. Three issues made it so. The Finaly Affair, centering around the guardian-
ship of two young boys, involved Jews and certain Catholic elements in a bitter fight and before it was finished made Jews feel that their basic security was threatened.

Second, the anti-Semitic campaigns in the Soviet satellite states and the Soviet Union itself led to struggles between the Jewish Communists in France and anti-Communist groups for the support of Jewish public opinion and for the control of various community organizations.

Third was the reaction in France to the case of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, convicted and executed as atom spies in the United States.

These events and their consequences overshadowed the normal activities and development of the Jewish community during the year. Moreover—in a country where news on Jews and Jewish subjects rarely attracted general attention during the normal course of events, if one excepts news about Israel—Jews and Jewishness were topics of constant front-page discussion in France throughout the year.

The Finaly Affair

Immediately after Hitler's invasion of Austria, in 1938, Dr. Fritz Finaly and his wife fled to France and settled in a suburb of the city of Grenoble, La Tronche. They had two children, Robert, born in April 1941, and Gerald, born in July 1942. Both boys automatically became French citizens by reason of birth. Both were circumcized, despite the dangers inherent in such an act after the German conquest of France. Fearing the worst, however, the Finalys decided to protect their children by placing them in the Catholic school of St. Vincent de Paul, where there would be less chance that the Germans would find them. In February 1944 both parents were deported, their children being three and one-and-a-half years old at the time. Neither ever returned. Friends had the children moved to another Catholic institution, Notre Dame de Sion.

Because the Finaly children stood out in this institution which kept only boys and girls of school age, the Finalys were entrusted to the care of a Mlle Antoinette Brun, director of the municipal nursery of Grenoble. Mlle Brun, showing real heroism, also took in eight other Jewish children for safeguarding from the Germans. These she later returned to their parents. The Finaly children, however, she attempted to keep, despite efforts of the relatives to obtain them. And this was the source of the conflict to follow.

Dr. Finaly had three surviving sisters. One of them, a Mrs. Fischel living in New Zealand, wrote to the Mayor of La Tronche within a year of the death of the Finalys, as soon as mail communication was possible, and succeeded in making contact with Mlle Brun by July 1945. At first it appeared that there would be no difficulties. In November 1945 Mlle Brun wrote Mrs. Fischel, stating that the boys were well and that "your nephews are Jews, that is to say they belong to their original religion," but putting off their return on the ground that conditions of transportation were still too unsettled. But as time went on and the boys were not returned, Mrs. Fischel became worried and asked several organizations, such as the Red Cross, to
contact Mlle Brun on her behalf. Finally, she received word that Mlle Brun flatly refused to give up the children and had in fact had herself named their provisional guardian at the very time, November 1945, when she had first written to New Zealand. New appeals to Mlle Brun proved unsuccessful. To M. Keller, a Grenoble representative appointed by the three Finaly aunts to press their case, Mlle Brun declared: "I've had the boys baptized, if that news is any pleasure to you."

By this time it was 1948. The Finaly aunts decided on legal proceedings, which were begun by Keller. Under French law a so-called family council is appointed for orphan children. The original council had contained some friends of Dr. Finaly. Mlle Brun got the courts to appoint a new council packed with her own friends on the grounds, later shown to be untrue, that she was unable to locate the original council members. By July 1949 Keller had won the reappointment of the original council. This promptly ordered Robert and Gerald turned over to Keller, as the representative of the aunts. Mlle Brun refused, beginning the first of a series of court appeals.

The case dragged until June 1952, when the Appeals Court of Grenoble affirmed the family council decision. It named as guardian Mrs. Hedwige Rossner, a resident of Israel and the youngest of the three aunts, who had agreed among themselves that she was best qualified to bring up the boys. Mlle Brun, however, still persisted in her decision not to relinquish the boys, who could not be found. A complaint was filed against her and on January 29, 1953, the Court of Appeals issued a final order against Mlle Brun. While she could—and later did—appeal to France's highest judicial body, the Cour de Cassation, the Appeals Court ruling meant that she must turn the children over first.

From June 1952 to January 1953, it was later revealed, the children had been moved from one Catholic institution to another to keep them from being found. Now extraordinary steps were taken to avert their discovery. Under false names, the boys were moved by friends of Mlle Brun from a Notre Dame de Sion school in Marseille to the boarding school of St. Louis de Gonzague, near Bayonne. The Superior there, a Father Silhouette, knowing about the Finaly case and suspicious of the identity of the two lads turned over to him rather suddenly, notified the Bayonne district attorney, who contacted his counterpart in Grenoble. On February 3, 1953, Keller appeared at the school with the proper papers to claim Robert and Gerald. But they had been spirited away during the night. Later it was discovered that they had been taken to Spain, having to trek by foot across snow-covered Pyrenees passes. There, all trace of them was lost. With the kidnapping and disappearance, and the arrests that followed, the Finaly Affair became a cause célèbre in earnest.

The next six months were filled with behind-the-scenes negotiations to get the Finaly children back, and with violent public polemics as to what should be the boys' destiny, if and when returned. The arrests of Mlle Brun, of a Mother Superior of the Notre Dame de Sion order, and of several Basque priests who had been accomplices to the kidnapping added fuel to the fire. Public opinion was sharply divided. Mlle Brun's supporters pointed to her act of heroism in saving the Finalys and other Jewish children, and cried
out about "Jewish ingratitude." She, they said, who had given them love and affection for so many years, was the "true mother" of the Finaly boys, rather than some strange aunts who had never seen them and had shown no interest in them. Much of the French public was still unaware at the time of writing (October 1953) that eight years had elapsed between the first effort to recover the children and their ultimate return in June 1953; or that Mlle Brun had not seen the children more than once or twice a year after they reached school age, since they lived in various Catholic boarding schools away from Grenoble. Stories spread that the relatives wanted the children only because Dr. Finaly was supposed to have left a large estate. The nationalist argument was raised that the children were French, that their father had intended them to live as Frenchmen, and that sending them to a foreign state like Israel should not be permitted. Even such a leading Catholic intellectual as Nobel prize-winning François Mauriac, arguing that the children themselves should be the ones to decide their future home and religion, declared that the spiriting away of the boys was comprehensible, since the abductors' praiseworthy aim was to prevent the children's being "kidnapped" to Israel. Sentimental, juridical, and nationalist arguments filled thousands of columns in newspapers and magazines, as did speculation about the boys' location, and even as to whether one of them had not died crossing the Pyrenees.

CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

Soon, however, the more crucial issues at stake loomed into view. Was the Catholic hierarchy involved in the kidnapping or had individual fervent Catholics acted on their own? And was the Church seeking to keep the children on the ground they had been baptized? As weeks passed without any real trace of the children, tempers became frayed. Guy de Rothschild, president of French Jewry's Consistoire Centrale, sharply commented on "ideological kidnappings," and declared that the number of Catholic clergy and institutions involved in the affair made it impossible to believe that the Church itself had not taken a hand. Jewish worries increased as many churchmen took up a classic Church position on the lines expressed by the Reverend Father Gabel in Le Croix, official organ of the French Church. Said he: "The Church is a perfect society that has authority over those who have become its members by baptism." His only concession was that the Church itself might, because of other factors, decide not to press the issue of baptisms in every case. Other churchmen declared that the circumstances surrounding the baptism of the Finaly boys were such as to make it invalid.

JEWISH REACTION

French Jews could not but recall that in a similar case a hundred years before, a lad named Mortara, who had been baptized not by a priest as was the case with the Finaly children, but by an illiterate peasant girl, had never been returned to his parents. The Mortara case, indeed, had been one of the main reasons for the founding of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. And

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1 March 7, 1953.
before the Finaly Affair was ended, France's Grand Rabbinate was to warn\(^2\) that "no Jewish child is any longer safe from a secretly administered baptism; no Jewish child, even if irregularly baptized, is any longer protected against the fanatic zeal of priests liable to abduct it from its family so as to keep it in the Catholic faith."

On the other hand, the Bishop of Grenoble\(^3\) called on all good Catholics to bring about the return of the children. Shortly after the boys disappeared a representative of the Church's highest authority in France, Cardinal Gerlier, Primate of Gaul, entered into negotiations with France's Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan and with representatives of the Finaly family. On March 6, a five-point accord was reached.

**ACCORD**

The children were to be brought back without any police intervention or any publicity, and all prosecutions against persons involved in the abduction were to be dropped by the Finaly family. The boys were to live with Mrs. Rossner after their return, but on an estate outside of Paris, and the aunt was to undergo special schooling preparatory to taking care of them. For four months after their return, all decisions concerning the boys were to be made by the three negotiating parties. During this time, it was hoped, an agreement could be reached fixing the "respective rights" of the parties concerned. No religious pressure of any kind was to be exercised on the children during the four months; after that they were to be completely free to choose their faith for themselves, and their choice was to be respected. This agreement rather avoided the issues posed by the Finaly affair; but the Jewish side agreed to it in the paramount interest of getting the children back, and as a means of avoiding interfaith friction as far as possible.

As the months went by, however, repeated deadlines set for the return of the children were not met. In the interval Mlle Brun and the Basque priests were released from jail. Finally, in a statement to the press, Grand Rabbi Kaplan asserted that "despite a three-month wait, the promises of the Catholic hierarchy have not been kept . . . high Church dignitaries have never officially condemned the kidnappers. . . ." He stigmatized, too, "those who invoke the rights of the family when it serves their interest, but tread on these same rights when the family is Jewish." The delay was too much even for Mauriac. He declared in his influential editorial column in *Le Figaro*\(^4\) that either the Catholic hierarchy had the power to return the children and should do so; or it could not and should say so; or if it wanted to oppose its Church claims to the juridical claims of the Finaly relatives, it should do so openly.

**GOVERNMENT POLICY**

The French government, in the meantime, was treading very cautiously. If the children were ultimately not returned, there would be a clear issue of church authority versus state authority in a country where church-state rela-

\(^2\) June 5, 1953.

\(^3\) February 12, 1953.

\(^4\) June 9, 1953.
tionships had often been the subject of political warfare. On the one hand, the deeply Catholic Basque country was highly indignant at the arrest of the abbés and churchmen involved in the kidnapping. On the other hand, some groups in Parliament were threatening to re-examine the legislation under which Catholic schools were receiving government support. For Jews it was important to know whether the government would defend their juridically won position in the battle with Catholic elements. Jewish premier René Mayer diplomatically turned the handling of the affair over to Catholic Minister of Justice Martinaud-Deplat, whose agents searched vigorously for traces of the two children, but dealt warily with the clergy involved in the abduction.

Towards the end of June 1953, France's supreme court denied Mlle Brun's appeal for possession of the children. Within a few days, whether by coincidence or not, Basque priests in Spain who had been keeping the children turned them over to Basques in France, who gave them to a representative of Cardinal Gerlier, who immediately took them to the estate near Paris of a leading Jewish member of the Amitié Judéo-Chrétien, André Weil. There followed a few highly confusing weeks until Mrs. Rossner decided the children's future by taking them to Israel. There were some charges that the March 6 agreement had been broken, to which Mrs. Rossner replied that it had long lapsed and never indeed been kept. She dropped her charges against Mlle Brun and the others; the French government did not bring any. Some articles appeared in France about the life of the Finaly boys in Israel. As an issue, however, the Finaly Affair died down—save that it undoubtedly left a residue of mutual Jewish-Catholic distrust which would take some time to disappear.

**Jewish Attitude**

The Jews of France were united in their feelings on the Finaly case as on no other issue. True, there was a certain lack of cohesion and cooperation among the great number of Jewish groups that sought, one way or another, to effect the children's recovery. There were considerable differences in the approaches and arguments of the French Rabbinate and the Consistoire Centrale de France, the Alliance Israélite, the French Section of the World Jewish Congress, the Zionist groups, and the organizations which took up the battle for the Finalys in other lands, such as the American Jewish Committee and the Agudath Israel. Nonetheless there was complete agreement that the children must be returned, and that the basic security of Jews in France and elsewhere was tied up with the destiny of Gerald and Robert Finaly.

In their struggle, Jewish groups received much help and support from many non-Jewish organizations and individuals who joined Finaly Defense Committees, as well as from many prominent Catholic priests and laymen.

**Communist Anti-Semitism and Reactions in France**

About 60 per cent of the estimated 250,000 to 300,000 Jews in France were of East European origin. Many of them came to France between the two
world wars or after the second. Little wonder, then, that news of East European Communist anti-Semitism—as shown in the Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia, the arrest of the Jewish doctors in Moscow, and the flight of Jews from East Germany (see p. 263)—should have a strong effect on much of the Jewish community in France.

The Jews of East European origin in France were seriously divided ideologically. The Zionists, the Bundists, and the Communists each had their own followers, their own newspapers, and their own organizations. For years, the Zionists and the Bundists had been waging ideological warfare with the active and well-organized Communist Union des Juifs pour la Resistance et l’Entr’aide. Now this warfare took on a new intensity and a new direction, the anti-Communists determining to drive the Communists out of organized Jewish life in France.

JEWISH ANTI-COMMUNIST ACTION

The anti-Communist forces organized a new coordinating group, the Comité d’Entente, whose main strength came from the Poale (Labor) Zionists, the Jewish Socialist Bund, the pro-Zionist Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France, and the B’nai B’rith. This committee sponsored\(^5\) a highly successful meeting to protest the anti-Semitic actions of the Soviet and its satellites at the Palais de la Mutualité. The Comité also organized successful meetings in the cities of Nancy, Lyon, Toulouse, Bordeaux, and Rouen.

In addition, the Comité published short pamphlets and leaflets in Yiddish and French describing anti-Semitic events in Eastern Europe, and reprinted from Polish and Rumanian papers Goebbels-like cartoons caricaturing Jews. Due to the efforts of the Comité’s member groups, a resolution was successfully introduced\(^6\) into the Conseil Représentatif des Israélites de France (CRIF), the central representative organization of Jewish organizations in France, protesting “vehemently against this official position of anti-Semitism by a state which is taking up the most odious and discredited libels of a so-called Jewish world conspiracy as an easy recourse for finding a scapegoat.” Hopes that the Communist bodies in CRIF, defeated by 18-7, would quit after passage of such a resolution proved overoptimistic.

Members of the Comité had difficulty in deciding whether to try to drive the Communist groups out of CRIF or whether to organize a new national Jewish representative body excluding the Communists. They decided upon the former tactic. A new motion was carried through CRIF\(^7\) denouncing the Communist line regarding the Prague trial and the so-called Moscow doctors’ “plot”—and providing that groups not supporting this resolution had one month in which to change their minds or be expelled from CRIF. In this vote—as in the case of the previous resolution—the Comité was joined by the Consistoire Centrale, the Alliance Israélite, the Sephardim, and other organizations whose membership came largely from indigenous French Jews. The Communists prepared to fight back on the grounds that their expulsion from CRIF would be unconstitutional.

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\(^5\) January 19, 1953.
\(^6\) December 16, 1952.
\(^7\) March 18, 1953.
The issue never came to a test. Before the month of grace had passed, Stalin died and the Soviet Union reversed its line on the "doctors' plot." During the resultant confusion, as people watched to see what would be the new Soviet policy, coordinated anti-Communist action was relaxed; the Comité never followed up its original scheme and gradually ceased activity.

**Effect on Non-Communists**

In another area, the attempt to split with the Communists had more conclusive results. Several Jewish war veterans' and resistance groups in France, both Communist and non-Communist, had been united under one organization. Led by Jacques Orfus, the non-Communists broke away and founded their own Association of Jewish War Volunteers. Some of the Jewish welfare groups and *landsmannschaften* which wanted to take action against Communist elements found themselves blocked because, by the charters granted to such groups under French law, members could only be expelled for criminal activity.

But many individuals who had seen no inconsistency in belonging to both Zionist and certain pro-Communist organizations found themselves forced to make a choice. The most notable case was that of André Blumel, who was president of a Zionist organization and at the same time of the Movement Contre le Racisme et l'Anti-Sémitisme, Pour la Paix (MRAP), which had consistently followed the Communist line. When the MRAP executive refused to seek explanations from Czechoslovakia for the anti-Semitism manifested at the Slansky trial, Blumel quit.

Until Stalin's death, the Jewish Communists in France were clearly on the defensive. This could be seen in the falling circulation of their Yiddish newspaper *Naye Presse*, the poor attendance at their meetings, and their appeals to their supporters not to be "misled" by opposing "warmongering" groups and the "capitalist lackey" Yiddish papers, the Zionist *Unser Wort* and the Bundist *Unser Shtimme*. The ideological "line" followed by the Jewish Communist groups did not differ significantly from the general Communist "line"; the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies were not attacking Jews, only the "criminal Zionist" elements and the "medical murderers in white" working for the Western powers; not the Communists but their opponents were the true anti-Semites, the Zionists having a "racial concept" of Judaism as opposed to the Communist policy of Jewish integration; Communist anti-Semitism had all been invented, and was a capitalist plot. But as excitement died down, thanks to subsequent events, the Jewish Communist groups managed to weather the storm and retained, in great measure, the "hard core" strength which was theirs before the Slansky trial. Nevertheless, a number of fellow-travelers and fringe supporters dropped off, Communists were driven from executive posts in a few Jewish bodies and, more than before, the Communist groups were isolated from the rest of the Jewish community.

**Public Opinion**

General French public opinion was fairly unanimous in its denunciation of Communist anti-Jewish acts. Though after the Prague trials some papers...
like *Le Monde* speculated that the campaign might be merely anti-Zionist rather than anti-Jewish, there were no more such speculations after the "doctors' plot." To counteract public opinion, in addition to daily stories justifying the Soviet action, the Communist evening newspaper *Ce soir* launched a special attack. It ran a series of ten lengthy articles whose major theses were: that the JDC, the American Jewish Committee, and the Jewish Labor Committee were all controlled by evil Jewish capitalists working on behalf of the American State Department; that, similarly, under the direction of Israel Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and American Jewish Committee president Jacob Blaustein, the Jewish Diaspora had become an arm of United States policy, with the primary aim of stirring up trouble and the desire for emigration in the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies; that Jewish bankers had financed Hitler; that the former American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) Director for Europe and North Africa, Joseph J. Schwartz, had been involved in a plot against the Rumanian government; and that JDC personnel were spies.

The charges were not taken seriously or even reported by the rest of the French press, save for a few lines in the right-wing *Aurore*, and two articles attacking *Ce soir* in the Socialist *Le Populaire*. *Ce soir*, incidentally, stopped publication a few weeks later. Its circulation had fallen so low that the Communist Party decided it was not worth the expense.

**The Rosenberg Case**

The impact of the case of the United States atom spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, who were executed on June 19, 1953, was stronger in France, probably, than in any other European country. There were mass demonstrations against their execution in front of the United States Embassy in Paris, in the course of which one man was shot. Piles of floral wreaths were stacked several feet high at ceremonies held in their honor. Conservative newspapers like *Le Figaro* featured the Rosenberg death-cell letters. Yet, though stronger than in other lands, the repercussions in France were in many ways typical of Western Europe.

There was a widespread feeling that the Rosenbergs were not guilty; that the testimony of David Greenglass, the government's most important witness, was unreliable; that the jury had been rigged because, despite New York's Jewish population, there had not been a single Jew on it; that the Rosenbergs should have received a more merciful sentence. The severity of the penalty, it was almost universally believed, was the result of American cold-war hysteria and fear; some also believed it reflected a basic underlying anti-Semitism in the United States.

Though by and large these arguments were launched by the Communist-dominated Committee for the Defense of the Rosenbergs, and stressed every day by the entire Communist propaganda machine in one of its most active campaigns of recent years, some of France's staunchest anti-Communists also petitioned the White House for clemency; among them were President Vincent Auriol and a number of French cardinals and high churchmen.

The French Rabbinate likewise made a plea for the Rosenbergs, on the
The text of this plea was never made public, however, and news about it was not released until after it became known that Pope Pius had indicated Catholic interest in clemency, lest the Rabbinate's plea be misused by Communist propagandists for their own purposes.

The Rosenberg case also helped blunt the impact, both in the Jewish and general French community, of Communist anti-Semitism. Emphasis on the Rosenbergs and charges of anti-Semitism in the United States were the Communists' most valuable asset in diverting attention from anti-Semitic events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Because of their conjuncture in time, because "anti-Semitism" was being hurled as a charge by both Communist and anti-Communist groups, because death sentences were involved both in the East and West, the Communist campaign against Jews and the Rosenberg case took on for many a certain parallelism and an equal weight. Certainly, United States' prestige suffered by this analogy.

Jewish Population

There was little modification during the year under review either in the structure of the Jewish community of France or in its direction; but there was some progress in previously charted areas of activity.

Demographically, the Jewish community changed less than during any other year since the end of the war. According to figures supplied by the JDC and by the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), 1,365 Jews who had been living in France for some time left the country between July 1952 and July 1953; another 639 who were relatively recent newcomers also moved on to new destinations. Emigration was primarily to the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Movement to Israel was trifling, totaling only 69 during the first six months of 1953. These were more than balanced by returnees from Israel to France, whose number was continuing to grow and who were posing special problems for welfare and migration organizations and for the French government. The backlog of persons registered for emigration was also low, no more than a few thousands; these were by no means willing to take the first emigration opportunity possible, but were for the most part hoping eventually to enter the United States or Canada. There were no important Jewish transient groups left, the largest being about 500 persons attached to different Yeshivah and rabbinical groups.

Population Survey

There had been no real demographic study of France's Jewish population since the end of the war. In the summer of 1953, however, the Fonds Social Juif Unifie, central fund-raising organ of French Jewry, assigned one of its personnel to make such a study, whose results were to be available in 1954. The raw preliminary investigations seemed to confirm previous estimates that there were at least 150,000 Jews in the Paris area, about a third of them in the small suburbs around the city proper; that more or less organized Jew-
ish communities existed in another thirty French cities and towns, including another 50,000 Jews; and that an additional 20,000 to 30,000 Jews were located in small towns and villages with practically no form of Jewish contact whatsoever. The 50,000 to 60,000 Jews in Alsace and Lorraine fell into a special category. In this area there existed an old, well-organized community with a fairly strong—though gradually weakening—religious base. The Jewish community organization there had an official status and received government financial support thanks to special laws regarding religion and schooling in effect in this part of the country.

But only some 30,000 French Jews made any more or less contact with organized Jewish life, whether through membership in some group, contribution to a fund-raising body, subscription to a newspaper, or in some other way. To find some means of contacting the mass of Jews in France was one of the basic problems of the Jewish organizations.

Anti-Semitism

The influence on French public opinion of the small openly anti-Semitic groups in France, and of their newspapers like Aspects de la France and Rivarol, was unimportant in comparison with the attitudes toward Jews created by the Finaly Affair, or with the picture of Jews and Jewish organizations given those French workingmen who read such Communist papers as Ce Soir and L'Humanité.

For the anti-Semitic groups and newspapers, however, the events of the year provided a field day. The Finaly Affair, they shouted, showed how the base foreign Jew could throw good French Catholics in jail; how the Zionist and Jewish world order could "kidnap" two children who, by all rights, must be considered French; how the government was under Jewish rule, having signed a secret treaty with the Jewish Agency that all orphan children claimed by the Jews must be sent to Israel.

The dispute between the Soviet Union and Jews in the free world about Soviet anti-Semitism, they told their readers, was nothing more than a schism between the two great wings of the Jewish international, Jewish Communism and capitalism. The Rosenberg case proved that all Jews were spies and traitors. And the fact that René Mayer could become premier, and Mendes-France aspire to the post, was ample testimony that the Jews had made a conquered country of France. The circulation of Aspects de la France and Rivarol, weeklies with a combined distribution of about 70,000 copies, much of which was probably duplicatory, did not change significantly during the year. There was still no knowledge of how these papers got their support, their income obviously being much lower than their cost of production.

Death of Maurras

In November 1952 the anti-Semitic element in France lost its leading light. Charles Maurras, French Academician and master of prose, died at the age of eighty-four. Amnestied in April 1952 from a life sentence for collaboration with the Germans, he had devoted his period of freedom to writing vio-
lent attacks against Jews and the French resistance movement. Charges of racial defamation were being pressed against him when he died.

French Fascist groups essayed to render homage to Maurras in ceremonies at a leading Paris concert hall, with the Vichy regime's Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, Xavier Vallat, as the principal speaker. Prompt protest by Jewish and resistance groups led the Prefecture of Police to ban this meeting, on the grounds that it would lead to a public disturbance. Vallat, whose court sentence forbade him to come to Paris, nonetheless appeared in the city in May 1953 to autograph copies of a book he had written on the life of Maurras. This time, protests of the various Jewish groups to the authorities were of no avail, and Vallat received police protection.

During the Occupation a converted Jew, Gabriel Marcel, had written a play, Sign of the Cross, in which a Jewish family expressed great admiration for Maurras, and justified the acts of the Germans and the Vichy regime. For years the author had tried without success to get the play shown in Paris. Late in 1952 he decided that if he could get the piece played in Brussels first, he would then be able to move it back to Paris. Protest in Belgium was so strong, however, that showings were cancelled early in December 1952.

Amnesty of Collaborators

On the legal front those who had collaborated with the Vichy regime benefited from an amnesty bill restoring civil rights to all but the very worst collaborators, passed August 6, 1953.

All those who had received a collaboration prison sentence of five years or less were amnestied, as were all who had been minors when condemned. Only those collaborators who had been condemned for some other crime calling for imprisonment of two years or more were not affected by the release from national degradation. Civil servants who had been dismissed for collaboration were given the right to pensions, which were calculated for all the years during which they had been banned from service; a large number of persons who had been ineligible to participate in elections now found this right restored to them.

Naturalization

In the fall of 1952 it appeared that the French government might sponsor a bill under which a naturalized French citizen could lose his citizenship if, at any time during five years after naturalization, the French administrative authorities decided he was not sufficiently acclimatized to France and the French way of life. The dangers of such a measure, and the abuses possible under it, were immediately apparent. No action was taken by the government, however, and for the time being the project appeared to have been laid aside.

The Neo-Nazi International in Paris

For years neo-Nazi groups in different countries had been striving to found a neo-Nazi international, meeting for that purpose in Rome in 1950, Zurich in 1951, and Malmö, Sweden, in April 1952. Publications of the different neo-Nazi groups themselves showed, however, that these efforts had
not been very successful. In January 1953 another attempt was made, at the instigation of the French group organized as a result of the first meeting in Rome, the Comité National Francais.

The three hundred delegates at the Paris conference included representatives from neo-Nazi and fascist groups in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Italy, and Denmark, as well as France. Letters of encouragement were sent by the women's sector of the Spanish Falange, and from the United States by Judge George W. Armstrong's followers, Conde McGinley's Common Sense group, and Gerald L. K. Smith.

This congress seems to have produced no more tangible results than the previous meetings. In France, as a matter of fact, the Comité National Francais split up. Its best-known figure, Maurice Bardeche (see American Jewish Year Book, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 252-53), was attacked as early as 1952 by other members for trying to impose the policies adopted at international neo-Nazi meetings on the national group, rather than simply presenting them to the Comité as a subject for study and examination. Bardeche thereupon formed his own small group, the Comité de Coordination des Forces Nationales. Neither group appeared to have any significant following, influence, or publication. Leaders of the Comité National Francais were the relatively unknown Charles de Jonquiere and Maurice Achart, while René Binet was charged with the duty of maintaining contact with neo-Nazi groups in other lands.

**Defense**

The effort begun in May 1952 by the B'nai B'rith to form an over-all group in France to coordinate the activities of organizations doing defense work died stillborn. Nothing was done, either, on various studies of group libel law which had been projected the year before (see American Jewish Year Book, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 253). There was certain legislation against racial defamation, but a decision handed down by the Paris Court of Appeals on March 25, 1953, tended to weaken its force. Ruling on a judgment handed down against the author of an anti-Semitic article, the court set aside the original conviction on the grounds that while the article was defamatory in nature, it had not been sufficiently established that the article incited hatred of the Jews, for its author had used "terms appealing to reason and not to passion." The article had called for a "healthy distrust" of Jews and a "French type" of anti-Semitism, "reasonable and measured," to be enforced by "just and necessary laws."

**Community Organization**

The idea of forming a Jewish *kehilla* in France to serve the traditional social, cultural, and religious needs of Jews of East European origin made little headway during the year under review. Some 6,500 persons indicated their interest in such a *kehilla*, but only about 2,600 showed up to cast ballots in an election.

*Kehilla* advocates, led by Israel Jefroykin, hoped that the Fédération des
Sociétés Juives de France, a loose grouping of *landsmannschaften* and cultural and welfare organizations, would turn over its premises and resources to the *kehilla*. They argued that the Federation form of organization was outmoded; that *landsmannschaften*, looking to the past, could not hope to attract future strength; and that direct elections, as conducted by the *kehilla*, were more democratic than the Federation system, where officers were indirectly chosen. The opposition to Federation revision was headed by Armand Schlisselman, the Federation vice president, who argued that the Federation was rendering valuable services, while the *kehilla* had not yet proven itself. *Kehilla* advocates had never succeeded in attracting any real strength outside of Federation circles, though they had originally hoped that Bundists and even members of the Jewish Communist groups would join. Essentially the question, therefore, was whether the Federation should radically reform its structure.

**New Organization**

While this struggle was going on, a new organization, the Conseil Représentatif du Judaisme Traditionaliste, sought to unite Orthodox Jews, whether French or East European in origin, Sephardic or Ashkenazic. Founded in June 1952, it had within a year gained the adherence of several synagogues and cultural groups. During the year the efforts of the Conseil and other more Orthodox groups resulted in the opening of a new youth center called the Merkaz of Montmartre, comprising a kindergarten for 100 children, a club and Talmud Torah for 200 children of school age, and a home for 30 university students, in a four-story building. The institution was openly intended to lessen the threat to Montmartre Jewry of a so-called “Christian synagogue” established by the Catholics which had been making headway among poor North African Jews living in the quarter, by the offer of clothing and nourishment. Guiding spirits behind the Merkaz were Mathieu Muller and the president of the new Conseil, Edmond Weil. The Conseil, studying other areas where it could be of service, was investigating French law to see whether separate Jewish cemeteries might be set up for the Jewish dead, as one means of creating greater cohesion of spirit among the living.

**Fund Raising**

It was perhaps the continued growth of a trend to community planning in the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU) which was the best augury for the development of a more rational and efficient community structure. The FSJU, central fund-raising organ for local needs, raised a new high of over 155,000,000 francs ($445,000) from 6,300 donors during its 1952 campaign as compared with 95,000,000 francs ($270,000) from 3,670 givers in 1951. In the early months of 1953, the level of giving was about the same as 1952; but it was hoped to reach a new peak in the fall 1953 drive.

More and more, the FSJU sought to analyze and meet community needs. In 1952 it continued the policy begun in 1951 of combining duplicate organizations: thus, two loan funds were merged into one, at substantial savings,
and two family assistance groups bowed out of the field. Similarly, the FSJU appointed a number of committees to study various aspects of community life, indicate gaps, and suggest what could be done; it promised its financial support for reforms. In March 1953 it called a conference to discuss the cultural and educational situation of the community. Thus the FSJU had been getting ready to undertake more active guidance of Jewish institutional activity in France, in cooperation with the JDC.

Social Welfare

Welfare work by the institutions attached to the FSJU directly affected almost 6,900 persons during 1952. Of these, 2,464 received cash relief; 2,200 medical care; 980 vocational training through ORT; 335 were in schools; and 910 were in children’s homes. Towards this work, the JDC contributed about 197,000,000 francs (about $560,000). Thanks to increased FSJU giving, however, the JDC was able to cut its contribution steadily—it had been 345,000,000 francs in 1950 and 218,000,000 in 1951. In addition, the JDC alone was responsible for the care of close to 900 transients, mainly attached to rabbinical groups and Youth Aliyah organizations. Finally, some 3,500 children were able to go to one of twenty-two camps during the summer months. The welfare load had been leveling off and could virtually be considered stable.

Religion

The formation of the Conseil Représentatif du Judaïsme Traditionaliste, described above, was the main new factor on the religious scene. Also, the threat to the Jewish community presented by the Finaly Affair stimulated a new interest in Judaism among some Jews.

The religious influence and organizational health of the Consistoire Central, the officially recognized representative religious organ of French Jewry, and of the Union des Associations Cultuelles Israélites de France, which grouped some fifty Jewish communities in metropolitan France and Algeria, remained weak. Some minor improvements were to be noted. Two synagogues were opened during the year, one in Montpellier, the other in Cannes. There was a celebration recalling the glories of the Jews of Carpentras, that curious enclave of Jewish life that had flourished in the Midi of France in the Middle Ages. There was a small increase in the Consistoire’s income and somewhat greater religious activity in the provinces, thanks to the efforts of co-Grand Rabbi Henry Schilli, appointed on a temporary basis after the death in July 1952 of Isaie Schwartz, together with co-Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan in January 1953.

Substantial help also came from the FSJU, which gave an important contribution to the Consistoire for renovating the seminary for rabbinical training. The French government also helped10 by permitting all rabbis to belong

10 May 1953, retroactive to January 1, 1952.
to the government pension system for managerial personnel, which would relieve the community of an important burden when its rabbis retired.

In an attempt to stimulate interest among the younger elements, the FSJU sponsored a Communauté des Jeunes. This brought together different youth movements of religious tendencies, such as the Jewish boy scouts, the Jeunesse Liberale, and the Union Scolaire. A special chaplain was appointed for this group, and plans were discussed for “youth day” programs, creation of a traveling library, and the formation of a speakers bureau to reach cooperating groups in the provinces.

Zionism

Zionist groups were seeking some new rationale on which to organize their activities. There was a rallying around when Israel and Zionism were attacked by the Communists; but no corresponding vigor was demonstrated when it came to tackling the everyday Zionist tasks of securing financial and moral support for Israel.

It had been hoped that the World Zionist meetings held in Israel (see p. —) might provide some new formula or approach, but they were inconclusive. And the divisions in thinking there were reflected in the French Zionist movement. Some Zionists sought to retain the status quo of party alignments, a source of much internal dissension and dissipation of energies. Others wished to reform the movement and eliminate party differences. In this and other areas, little changed during the twelve months under review.

While fund-raising pledges in the 1953 Aid to Israel campaign were on a par with the previous year’s 115,000,000 francs ($330,000) the rate of collections seemed to be falling behind. One of the most successful activities during the year was the sending of 300 children to live in Israel during the summer months.

It was expected that in the fall of 1953 another effort would be made to reorganize French Zionism, by seeking a wider base in the community among friends of Israel thus far unattached to the movement. Veteran French Zionist leader Marc Jarblum planned to leave for Israel by the end of 1953.

French relations with Israel continued to be quite friendly, despite disagreement on such points as the internationalization of Jerusalem.

Educational and Cultural Activity

Of approximately 50,000 children of school age, only about 2,500 in Paris and another 350 in the provinces (Alsace and Lorraine always excepted) received any Jewish schooling (see American Jewish Year Book, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 258). Although during the year under review the number of students remained the same, the FSJU helped to lay the groundwork for improvement. It defined the status of teachers in the institutions it helped support, outlining minimum salaries, working conditions, and pension rights; took steps to provide for standard examinations in the different schools; took over

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11 September 1953.
the center begun the year before by educator Isaac Pougatch to give technical guidance to the different schools; and finally, considered plans for a school to train instructors, where qualified volunteers would be given lodging and some support while taking courses preparing them to teach.

A project new to Jewish life in France was the move to establish a Jewish community center, patterned along American Jewish lines. Working together on this project with local groups were the JDC and the international branch of the American National Jewish Welfare Board. A $50,000 appropriation for the projected center was given by the Ford Foundation. The main obstacle to getting the center under way was the location of a suitable building.

Two new features of the French Jewish scene were the Youth Artistic Center and the Kinor Chorale. The Youth Artistic Center comprised forty young Jewish musicians studying at the Paris Conservatory of Music, who formed their own orchestra, led by Garry Bertini. They first made their mark, together with the Kinor Chorale, at a performance in the Palais de Chaillot in April 1953. During the 1953-54 season they planned to give four major concerts and six concerts for young people, with the emphasis on Jewish contemporary and folk music. The Kinor Chorale of eighty young men and women directed by Henri Milstein had been originally formed in December 1951 to participate in an international song fest in Israel.

The Union Mondiale des Etudiants Juifs, whose French branch numbered some six hundred students on a university level, formed a cinema club (a very popular institution in France) where the short subjects surrounding the major film were of Jewish interest. The Union Liberale, only Reform synagogue in Paris, also began a film program.

Finally, attempts were made to get Jewish book clubs under way, so that well-known works by Jewish writers now unobtainable in France would be translated into the French language.

The major cultural event of the year was the exhibition in one of Paris' leading art galleries of a rare and extensive collection of ancient books and incunabula from the Jewish section of the Royal Library of Copenhagen, Denmark. This exhibit, which created quite a stir, later traveled through the leading cities of Europe.

There was a falling off in the production of literature. The colony of Yiddish writers who had formerly lived in Paris had been dispersed by emigration, many going to Argentina. During the year, the Yiddish-language literary magazine Kiyoum disappeared. Among the more noteworthy books published in French were: Les Temps d'Epreuve, by Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan; the Les Juifs de France, by Joseph Millner; and Les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord; Marche vers l'Occident, by André Chouraqui.

Evidences, published by the European office of the American Jewish Committee, continued to print articles on Jewish subjects, both of a cultural and topical nature. Both the Cahiers de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Journal des Communautés, put out by the Consistoire Centrale, improved in size and format during the year. The house organs of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine and of the French Section of the World Jewish Congress appeared regularly, as did CRIF'S Information Bulletin.

One of the most colorful ceremonies of the year was the laying of the cornerstone for the Tomb of the Unknown Jewish Martyr, a project undertaken by Isaac Schneersohn, director of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine.

**Personalia**

The internationally known Jewish painter, Moshe Kisling, died on April 29, 1953, at the age of sixty-two. Born in Poland, he had come to Paris at the age of fifteen to study art, and made his home in France. He gained particular success as a painter of portraits, and was known for his rich use of color. A retrospective show of his work was put on after his death, in Paris.

**ABRAHAM KARLIKOW**

**BELGIUM**

Belgium was politically quiet through the period under review (July 1, 1952 through June 30, 1953). She suffered less material damage than England and Holland from the February 1953 flood disaster; but a gross mishandling of the public relations of the Palace led to the temporary recall of Baron Jules Guillaume, Belgian Ambassador in Paris, to reorganize the relationship between the sovereign, the government, and the public.

An attempt to use the cost of flood damage repair as a lever for raising the level of taxation led to intense opposition, especially inside the Government (Social Christian or Catholic) Party. The project was withdrawn, and the year saw increasing budgetary difficulty, caused in part by rearmament. Though Belgium was no longer earning enormous European Payment Union surpluses as in 1951-52, a large part of the accumulated credit was still outstanding. The internal financing of this absorbed much of the resources available in a rather inelastic system, in which the main emphasis was on measures against inflation. During the summer of 1953 the Belgian Government was forced to borrow money in the Netherlands. This arrangement was converted into a pre-maturity repayment of a funded debt that the Dutch owed the Belgians whose last installment was not due till 1981.

Because of her comparatively small postwar investment in the modernization and expansion of key industries, Belgium's economy could only with difficulty carry the big wage increases and social security charges to which it was committed by the Socialist-dominated governments of the immediate postwar period. The Dutch economic advantage as against the Belgians had

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13 Established in September 1953.
14 May 17, 1953.
caused considerable difficulties in the Benelux union; steps had recently been taken for the special protection of critically affected Belgian industries.

Belgium was helped by the fact that, under the Schuman Plan, she was able to raise her steel prices while German coal prices were brought up almost to Belgium's. But this was a precarious gain. Attempts were being made to develop new industries, to secure more "offshore" orders, and to expand foreign trade, including trade across the Iron Curtain.

The European Defense Treaty had come up for ratification, but this required constitutional amendments which could not be secured without a general election. The necessary measures were to come before parliament during the autumn 1953 session; but it was not yet clear when the election, which would in any case be due in 1954 and which would imperil the narrow majority of the present one-party government, would take place.

Jewish Population

There were in Belgium about 30,000 Jews. About 20 per cent had Belgian nationality. There were still some 6,000 with refugee status, i.e., possessing temporary residence permits on which was noted their obligation to re-emigrate; these persons had difficulty in getting permission to work. Sponsorship by the High Commissioner for Refugees entitled refugees to public assistance. Temporary residence permits were in practice renewed pending resettlement, and some holders had been absorbed into the Belgian economy.

The Jewish population in Belgium was largely concentrated in Brussels (about 18,000) and Antwerp (9,000). The remainder were scattered around the neighborhood of the chief industrial towns, notable Ghent, Liège, and Charleroi, and also Arlon and Ostend. There were about 500 Jews living in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Immigration and Emigration

Several organizations assisted Jewish migration. The Aide aux Israélites Victimes de la Guerre (AIVG) was agent for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and used the funds of the JDC, as well as its own and private donations. The Agence Juive (Jewish Agency) received donations from the Belgian Zionist Federation and other sources. The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society [of the United States] (HIAS) had offices in Brussels and in Antwerp.

HIAS paid up to 100 per cent of emigration costs. The Belgian government paid 50 per cent of the cost for children under eighteen years of age, who were orphans of the Jews of pre-war or wartime Belgian nationality or residence. HIAS estimated emigration during the year under review at about 500, somewhat less than the revised figure of about 680 for the previous year. This number included 115 cases with Belgian nationality or residence. The chief destination of the emigrants was the United States.
(70 per cent of cases); other destinations were Canada, 10 per cent; South America—mainly Brazil, 8 per cent; and Israel, 7 per cent.

The three agencies cooperated closely, and the chances for eventual liquidation of the emigration problem were good, in view of the agreement on emigration reached with Brazil in 1953, and the new United States Refugee Relief Act, signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on August 7, 1953.

Civic and Political Status

Grand Rabbi Solomon Ullmann had estimated that fifteen Jews obtained Belgian nationality during the year. Though the acquisition of Belgian nationality was neither quick nor easy for anybody, the Belgian government was extremely cooperative in providing refuge and helping in identification, even in cases of refugees arriving with their papers not fully in order.

Discrimination and Anti-Semitism

There was no discrimination or official anti-Semitism in Belgium, whether on racial or religious grounds. Though Belgium was itself overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, the tradition of tolerance was very deeply ingrained. There were excellent relations between the Consistoire Générale and the Archdiocesan Throne.

There was no sign of discrimination, and B'nai B'rith stated they had no call to organize efforts to combat it. Working permits were difficult for all foreigners to secure, and there was no evidence of their being specially difficult for Jews.

Jewish War Orphans

The Consistoire had consistently refused to adopt the attitude advocated by some Jewish nationalist elements that all Jewish war orphans should be returned to the custody of Jewish relatives, regardless of the consequences. It had insisted on considering such additional points as the desire of the deceased parents to raise the children in the Jewish religion, and the extent to which the children would be materially as well off with the relatives claiming custody as under their present guardianship.

The legal decision on three cases before the Belgian courts on the custody of Jewish children was still pending. There could be no question of any prejudice as a motivation for a delay in the decision. Indeed, in one case, a non-Jewish foster father had already been imprisoned for his refusal to disclose the whereabouts of the child he had hidden in fear of an adverse verdict. Irrespective of the legal issues, an intransigent attitude on the part of the Jewish community would have raised very adverse comment. The Finaly Affair in France was taken in The Netherlands as an instance of prejudice on both sides. Pointed comment came from La Metropole (Antwerp), a leading Catholic daily:
Obviously race prejudice is by no means dead, and the Communist world certainly will make such use of it as policy may dictate. It may well be believed that, in Germany, by no means everybody has recovered from Hitlerism; but the very unexpected, and highly regrettable, element in this situation is that the Jewish community, which has itself suffered so grievously from a cruel persecution, should itself adopt a racial prejudice of the same sort.

Community Organization

The Consistoire Générale Israélite de Belgique, in which each of the twenty-four communities was represented by at least one member, was headed by Grand Rabbi Ullmann. The Consistoire received helpful cooperation from the Roman Catholic episcopal authorities and from the Protestant Synod.

During the year under review a special act of parliament was again passed to exempt seventy-year-old Grand Rabbi Ullmann from the legal age-limit which would otherwise have prevented his continued service as Jewish grand almoner for the Belgian army. This was specially important since Rabbi Ullmann was the only Belgian rabbi and there would be difficulty in admitting a foreigner to army service. About 500 Jews were currently serving in the Belgian armed forces, 6 of them as officers.

The year under review saw further consolidation of the cooperation between the Brussels and Antwerp Jewish communities, the former mainly Liberal and the latter mainly Orthodox. This stemmed from the appointment of Marc Anisfeld as general secretary of the Belgian Zionist Federation. Due to this cooperation, the activities of Keren Kayemet (Jewish National Fund) and Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund) had been 30 per cent more productive than in the previous period.

Jewish Education

There were only three all-Jewish schools in Belgium, one in Brussels and two in Antwerp. One of the latter had an athenaeum, or secondary branch, attended by pupils in four grades. There were over 1,000 pupils in Antwerp, but the Brussels school had only 125 pupils in the eight primary grades. The teaching staff was all Jewish. The languages spoken were French and, in Antwerp, Flemish, and the subjects taught, besides those in the Belgian syllabus, included Hebrew and specifically Jewish subjects. It was still difficult to find teachers possessing both the Jewish and the Belgian teaching qualifications; the latter were required as a condition for the government subsidy.

Most Jewish children received their education in the state (nondenominational schools). A staff of eight Jewish teachers visited sixty of these schools to give instruction in Jewish subjects.

The secondary Talmud school at Kapellen, near Antwerp, had sixty-four pupils for its five-year course. The certificate of this school qualified alumni for higher religious studies in the universities of Paris and Amsterdam.
The Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT) had established two- and three-year courses in technical and trade subjects for pupils over fourteen. The ORT certificate was awarded to eighty-five pupils.

Such organizations as the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO), Maccabi, and the Union des Jeunes Gens Juifs provided sports meetings, country weekends, lectures, and libraries.

**Religious Life**

The shortage of rabbis and officiants was still a serious problem. There were only three rabbis and seven ministers-officiant, who shared responsibility for visiting the twenty-four communities. Two of the Antwerp synagogue councils, however, were considering the appointment of rabbis at present serving in the United States. Each of the communities received a subsidy from the Belgian government, the amount varying according to the community's size.

During the year under review the strictly Orthodox group, which formed a large part of the Antwerp communities, came in conflict with liberal and Zionist opinion on current issues. This came to a head when a dayan (religious judge) criticized the negotiations between the Israel and German governments and the provisions in Israel for compulsory military service for women. This brought forth a strong condemnation from the bimonthly *La Tribune Zionist*, which called for corporate protests to the Consistoire and the Antwerp Council of Jewish Communities. No authoritative statement had been issued, but it was understood that every effort was to be made to avoid similar incidents in the future.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

There was some expansion in Zionist activities during 1952-53, some 7,500 Zionists paying the traditional membership fee of a shekel. Keren Kayemet and Keren Hayesod did materially better in fund raising.

The Hebrew courses, one in Antwerp and three in Brussels, organized in the winter of 1952-53 by the Federation Sioniste de Belgique, were followed by twenty and seventy people respectively. During June 1953 a highly successful three-week summer course was organized at Duinbergen on the Belgian coast. Lectures on new aspects of the Hebrew language, and on Zionist affairs, were given by Jacob Katz of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Abraham Ben-Yehuda, director of the Israel Department of Education, and others. In 1953, for the first time, a group of children was sent for a six-week summer holiday in Israel, and twenty-nine Jewish students in Belgium visited Israel under a student interchange scheme.

An event of some importance was the visit to Israel of Socialist ex-Premier
Camille Huysmans. During his visit he was received by the Israel President, and was three weeks the guest of the kibbutz named after him.

Social Services

The Aide aux Israélites Victimes de la Guerre (AIVG) reported a serious economy drive during 1952-53. Though this body acted as the agent for the JDC, it had suffered from a shortage of private donations. A medical service in Brussels and a children's home in the suburb of Auderghem had to be closed down.

Together with the Federation Sioniste, and complemented by the Solidarité Juive (an organization with left-wing political tendencies and about 1,500 members), AIVG was still able to care for the aged, those in need, orphans, underdeveloped children, and tubercular cases. It had under its care sixty-eight children, forty-eight old people, and twelve tubercular patients. Administrative costs had been cut to a minimum; medical assistance had been given in 15,000 cases and legal advice to 4,000 people during the period under review.

The Zionist social center, Centrale de Bienfaisance Juive, gave 500 Jewish children a month's holiday in its home near Kapellenbosch.

Cultural Activities and Personalia

A feature of Jewish cultural life was the youth choir. Under the leadership of the young musician, Gilbert Tornhaym, it had grown to seventy-five members, had given performances in a number of cities and on the Belgian national radio, and had obtained a certificate for excellence at the song fest in Jerusalem in 1952.

A commemorative exhibition was held of the paintings of Jaubel Adler, who died in London in 1949. In Antwerp, a festival of Jewish films was held in January 1953.

Natan Lewkowitz, who died in Brussels in December 1952, had been supervisor of the ORT in Brussels, former president of the Keren Hayesod, and a committee member of the General Zionist party in Belgium and of the AIVG.

Moshe Chaim Maur, who died in December 1952 in Antwerp, had been president of the Brussels Orthodox Synagogue Council and one of the four Belgian delegates at the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in 1951. He had also been vice president of the Belgian Zionist Federation and of the Keren Hayesod.

Gavin Gordon
During the period under review (July 1, 1952, through August 30, 1953) Holland continued to enjoy political stability and economic progress. The only serious upheaval was the flood disaster of February 1, 1953 (see below).

Political Situation

On June 25, 1952, elections for the 100-member Second Chamber resulted in Labor's increasing its seats from twenty-seven to thirty, while the Catholic People's Party dropped from thirty-two to thirty. The Communists lost two of their eight seats, while the Liberals' number rose from eight to nine.

Complicated interparty negotiations delayed the formation of a new cabinet until September 1. The new government of Premier Willem Drees included four parties (Labor, Catholics, and the Protestant Christian Historical and Anti-Revolutionary parties—the last for the first time after the war) and one nonparty Minister.

The municipal elections of May 27, 1953, showed new slight gains for Labor and the Vereniging voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD) and further losses for the Communists and the denominational parties.

Economic Situation

For the first time since the liberation there was a surplus in the balance of payments. At the end of January 1953 the Netherlands waived United States economic aid for the fiscal year 1952-53 in view of the unexpected increase in the country's gold and dollar reserves. In August 1953 the Netherlands further liberalized its exchange controls. The price level remained about constant. Exports remained more or less stable, and imports decreased slightly.

Production continued upward; in the first quarter of 1953 it was 8 percent higher than in the same period of 1952. For the first time since the war, labor productivity reached the pre-war level. Industrial production on December 31, 1952, was 134 against 100 at the end of 1948.

Refugees

Because of overpopulation and a shortage of 275,000 dwellings, the Netherlands could make no contribution to solving the problem of the displaced persons (DP's). Refugees from Eastern Germany or other countries were generally not admitted, or, if they succeeded in crossing the frontier, were kept in police detention for many weeks. In the summer of 1953, 500 DP children from Germany were allowed to spend a six weeks' vacation in Holland.
The Flood Disaster

On February 1, 1953, a northwestern storm combined with a spring flood hit the islands of the provinces of South Holland and Zealand in the southwestern part of the country—the worst disaster of its kind for 350 years. Damage, apart from that to furniture and household stock and loss of production, was officially estimated at F 895,000,000 ($232,700,000). The disaster was followed by generous aid from other parts of the Netherlands and from most countries of the world. Financial contributions were centralized in the National Disaster Fund, under the chairmanship of Prince Bernhard, which at the end of the period under review had surpassed its original target of F 125,000,000 ($32,500,000). Clothing was received by the Netherlands Red Cross in such enormous quantities that it vastly exceeded the needs of the stricken area; hence it was decided to distribute the surplus—twenty-two kilos—to other needy persons in the Netherlands and abroad, especially to DP's. The Israel government sent five thousand cases of oranges to Holland, the Jewish Agency fifteen tons of clothing, and the Magen David Adom blankets and ten thousand doses of anti-typhoid vaccine. A special Netherlands Flood Disaster Fund in Israel yielded about £12,500. The World Executive of the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) instructed a number of its federations abroad to divert to the Netherlands shipments of warm clothing destined for WIZO institutions in Israel. The American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and OSE also made contributions.

Restitution

On July 1, 1952, the Hague Restitution Court ordered the Netherlands (State) Bank and the Bank A. de Bary to pay F 66,000,000 ($17,160,000) to the trustees of the Lippman-Rosenthal Bank, taken over by the Germans during the war, in partial compensation for Jewish assets seized in return for worthless German treasury paper.

In July 1953, a bill was unanimously approved by the Second Chamber authorizing the Treasury to allocate F 26,000,000 ($6,760,000) for the settlement of about 3,000 outstanding Jewish claims for restitution. Under this law many persons were to be compensated for 90 per cent of their property, instead of the 75 per cent fixed the previous year. Though some minor issues regarding restitution were still outstanding, the main problem had now been settled.

Jewish War Orphans

The problem of the Jewish war orphans still not returned to Jewish guardianship continued to remain unsolved. Eight years after the end of World War II, some of the 1,750 Jewish children whom the Nazi regime had left without parents or near relatives (the total number of war orphans was
4,000) had not yet been returned to Jewish surroundings. Over 750 were now over twenty-one years of age. Five hundred were under Jewish guardianship, 393 were still living with non-Jewish foster parents, and the fate of 69 was not yet decided. More Jewish children were being returned to the Jewish community, the Christian foster parents sometimes finding when the orphans grew up that despite their Christian education they did not fit into their non-Jewish surroundings. The foundation Le'ezrath Hayeled maintained contact with the Jewish children in non-Jewish homes by sending them parcels and letters on Jewish holidays.

The Netherlands also had a Finaly Affair. Two Dutch Jewish war orphan girls, Anneke Beekman and Rebecca (Betty) Milhado, both born in Amsterdam in 1950, had been brought up by foster mothers, in Hilversum and in Heerlen, in the Roman Catholic faith. Anneke Beekman was awarded to Jewish guardians by the Supreme Court on February 25, 1949, and disappeared from the home of her foster mothers, the Misses van Moorst, when a court officer called for her the same day. Betty Milhado was kidnapped twice by her foster mother; the first time her whereabouts were soon discovered, but not the second time. In both cases the foster mothers were arrested, but did not disclose anything and were released. A telegram on the matter sent on April 1, 1949, by Chief Rabbi Justis Tal to the then Minister of Justice (a Roman Catholic) was never answered.

In March 1953, after an editorial in the Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad called attention to the cases, several general dailies urged that the girls be traced. The Roman Catholic press at first took the view that while judgments by a civil court were binding on the Catholic conscience in general, it was not the task of the Catholic clergy to declare this rule applicable in concrete cases and thus to promote the execution of civil court orders. They stressed that the foster mothers, who had risked their lives in taking care of the children, felt in conscience bound not to obey the court decision, and that it was not in the children's interest to remove them from their now familiar surroundings. They even intimated that the girls might have run away themselves, for fear of being returned to a Jewish milieu.

Before Jewish bodies had taken official action the matter was raised in the Second Chamber. A Communist member, Mrs. R. Lips-Odinot, in April 1953, put a number of questions to the Minister of Justice, asking him to do everything possible to trace the girls, to appeal to the Archbishop of Utrecht to exercise his spiritual authority for the return of the girls, and to keep the Chamber informed.

Minister of Justice L. A. Donker (Labor), who had only taken up his post in September 1952, answered early in May 1953 that though the Ministry of Justice and the police had not succeeded in tracing the missing children, they had shown great zeal. As the inquiry so far had not shown that Catholic clergy were involved in the disappearances, the minister saw no occasion to ask the cooperation of Catholic church dignitaries. In the interest of the investigation, he could not give information in public on the nature and extent of the investigation measures, even to the Second Chamber. The minister was prepared to do everything possible to restore the girls to their lawful guardians if he received information as to their whereabouts.
After the return of the Finaly brothers to their Jewish relatives, at least partly as a result of the wide publicity given to the case, public appeals for the return of the two missing Dutch girls became stronger. On July 1 the executive bodies of the Ashkenazic and Portuguese Congregations sent telegrams to Queen Juliana and the Dutch Cabinet pleading urgently for an increased effort to trace the girls. A similar telegram was sent simultaneously by Chief Rabbi Tal to the Acting Archbishop of Utrecht, Mgr. B. J. Alfrink. Le'ezrath Hayeled had agreed to the sending of these telegrams. The Ashkenazic and Sephardic executive bodies also announced that, if the girls were not found soon, they would issue a White Paper on the matter in several languages.

The Acting Archbishop of Utrecht sent a reply to Chief Rabbi Tal in mid-July, stating that the Misses van Moorst had been informed by the church authorities that “they need not derive from their Catholic conviction the duty to keep the girl back.” Simultaneously, the letter appealed to the chief rabbi to make every effort to curb incorrect and tendentious press reports on the matter.

By the beginning of August, 1953, no replies had yet been received to the cables to the Queen and the Dutch Cabinet. Nor had a White Paper been published on the matter, or either of the girls been found. It was believed that the girls were in a Belgian convent. A report that one of them had been seen on July 10 at a convent at Kontich, near Antwerp, was denied by the Mother Superior of that convent.

In a statement to the daily Het Vrije Volk on July 27, the director of Le'ezrath Hayeled regretted the publicity given to the matter, especially in The New York Times. He had full confidence in the Dutch judicial and police authorities. He added that the question of how the girls would eventually be brought up would be decided only when the girls had been found, and a psychiatrist consulted. The interest of the children must come first.

In July leading dailies such as the Nieuwe Rotterdammer Courant, Algemeen Handelsblad, Het Vrije Volk and Het Parool published editorials calling for the return of the girls, as did the leading weekly De Groene Amsterdammer on July 25. On July 25 and 27, the reply of the Acting Archbishop to Chief Rabbi Tal was given considerable space in the Roman Catholic dailies, together with a detailed and factual account of the circumstances under which each of the girls had vanished.

**War Criminals and Collaborationists**

By July 1953 all but some 700 war criminals and collaborationists in Holland had been released from prison. Those freed included all who had been sentenced to prison terms of up to twelve years. Under Dutch law, one-third of the total prison term was usually deducted for good behavior in prison. In addition, several of those originally sentenced to life imprisonment had had this sentence commuted to one of imprisonment for a specific number of years, which could likewise be reduced by one-third. Of the 140 war criminals who were sentenced to death in Holland, only 40 were exe-
The remaining 100 had their death sentence commuted to imprisonment. In October 1952, the Minister of Justice stated that 12 of these 100 had already been released from prison and that another 15 would be freed in the foreseeable future.

**Lages Case**

In September 1952, the death sentence of W. P. F. Lages was changed by royal decree into one of life imprisonment. Lages, a German, had been head of the Gestapo in Amsterdam from May 1940 to May 1945 and responsible, *inter alia*, for the deportation and death of over 70,000 Jews. He had been sentenced to death in 1949. His appeal failed in 1950, and his request for a retrial was finally rejected in the summer of 1952.

The explanation of the commutation was that, though Lages had without doubt been one of the worst war criminals to commit war crimes and crimes against the human race during the German occupation of Holland, and though neither his personality nor his conduct offered any extenuating circumstances, yet seven and a half years had passed since Holland's liberation and Lages's last crimes. The request for a retrial, submitted in 1950, had been rejected only recently and Lages had thus been left in suspense as to his fate for two whole years.

This clemency, like that shown earlier to Aus der Fuenten and Fischer, aroused widespread indignation. Mass protest demonstrations were staged in Amsterdam and The Hague. The National Federative Council of the Former Resistance Movements and other organizations sent protests to the Premier. A Labor member of parliament, Jakob Burger, who had played a part in the Dutch resistance during the war and then joined the Dutch government in exile, put questions to the Minister of Justice, as did Communist and Liberal members of parliament.

The lapse of time since the war crimes were committed was also a factor taken into consideration in sentencing persons who had hitherto not been tried. In April 1953, for instance, the Amsterdam District Court imposed a one-year prison sentence on a man who between July 1942 and October 1943 had accepted tens of thousands of guilders from Jews whom he had promised to conduct to safety in Switzerland but whom he left to themselves at the Dutch-Belgian border. Some thirty of these had fallen into the hands of the Nazis and perished. At the same time, the same court imposed a five-month prison term on a non-Jewish woman who during the German occupation had denounced her Jewish husband to the Nazis. The husband had been deported and had perished in a concentration camp.

On the other hand, in the first week of May 1953 an Amsterdam journalist was fined ten guilders ($2.60) for having described a Dutch war criminal, Hendrik Blonk, as "a political delinquent" (the official term for persons sentenced as war criminals).

In January 1953 a committee headed by a Protestant professor of theology, Prof. E. L. Smelik, and a clergymen in charge of prison work, submitted a petition with 60,000 signatures demanding legislation against the reduction of life sentences for war criminals and condemning the government's clemency in recent years, specifically in the cases of Aus der Fuenten and Lages,
who had been directly responsible for the death of tens of thousands of Jews. The committee stressed that it was not in any way connected with Communist groups, who for their own ends had often staged protests against clemency for war criminals.

But in July 1953 the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church—to which the initiators of this petition also belonged—sent a petition to the Minister of Justice expressing its concern at the greater severity being shown towards "ex-political delinquents" still imprisoned. It warned against feelings of revenge and asked for sympathy for these prisoners, and for their wives and children, so that they should not feel ostracized and become a social danger. This letter was sent to all clergymen and church councils under the jurisdiction of the synod, to be made public "from the pulpit in Sunday schools, church councils, church periodicals, and in daily intercourse."

RESTORATION OF NATIONALITY

Dutch nationality was automatically lost if a Dutch national joined the armed forces of a foreign power without the permission of the Dutch authorities. During World War II, many Dutch nationals joined the German forces. The majority of them still lived on Dutch soil and had become stateless. The government felt that this situation created many administrative difficulties, and much hardship to those concerned.

A bill to restore the citizenship of those in this group had been introduced in 1950 by the then Minister of Justice, a Calvinist, but had met with strong opposition, especially from Labor, and was shelved. It was then redrafted by L. A. Donker, the new Labor Minister of Justice.

The new bill was adopted by the Second Chamber on April 21 and by the First Chamber on July 29, and became law on August 1, 1953. On both occasions, only the Liberals and the Communists—the only parties which were not members of the government coalition—voted against it.

The law almost automatically restored Dutch nationality to some 37,500 of these men, and their dependents, on their fulfillment of a few basic conditions. Twenty-five hundred more serious cases were to be examined more closely. Those with extreme right or extreme left views would generally be barred from re-naturalization. Most of those to be naturalized were to be denied the vote for a period of ten years.

Revival of Nazism

According to an article in the Dutch daily Het Parool (independent progressive) in January 1953, seven organizations of former Dutch Nazis existed in Holland, with a total membership of some 200,000 (2 per cent of the total population). The most important was the Foundation for Ex-Political Delinquents, with a reported membership of 150,000. The Foundation organized assistance for its members and promoted their economic reintegration after their release from prison from the ample funds
which it had at its disposal. But it also kept the national-socialist ideology alive among its members and sympathizers and occasionally took official action.

**Escape from Breda Prison**

Seven Dutch war criminals, most of whom had been sentenced to life imprisonment after commutation of their death sentences, escaped from Breda prison across the German frontier on December 26, 1952. They had all been convicted of atrocious crimes, many of them against Jews, as prison guards in concentration camps. In their escape they were aided by Dutch Nazis.

Two of the men were discovered fairly soon, another in April, 1953, still another in May, and a fifth at the end of July. They had all been living with friends and on false papers. Despite the requests by the Netherlands government for their extradition or expulsion, only one of the five men caught had been returned to the Netherlands at the time of writing (August 1953)—and that owing to the cooperation of the British occupation authorities, who arrested him immediately on his release by a German court (see also Germany, p. 246).

The person mainly responsible for arranging the escape of the seven was arrested and confessed, but as the maximum punishment for his offense—aiding a third person to escape police detention—was six months, he could not be held in custody. In July, however, he was arrested again, as he himself had served a prison sentence for collaboration but had been released early for good behavior. His help in the escape was now considered a violation of parole.

In June 1953, the former Dutch S.S. officer Paul van Tienen, who had been released from prison the previous year, officially announced the establishment of a political party—National European Social Movement (NESB)—which would contest the 1956 parliamentary elections. According to its communique the new party—whose name bore a close resemblance to that of the former Dutch Nazi party, the National Socialist Beweging (NSB)—would cooperate closely with similar movements in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, and Italy. Van Tienen was known to have many connections with former S.S. officers in Germany. He had previously headed the European Action Society, which also maintained a youth organization and a book import service for Europe; the latter organization distributed German Nazi literature, as well as the paper *Wiking Ruf*, edited by the former S.S. General H. O. Gille.

In August 1953, the NESB started publishing a weekly *Alarm*. The first attempt to sell it publicly was made on August 9. The four distributors were arrested within ten minutes and their remaining copies were confiscated. They were, however, soon released. The same thing happened the next Saturday in Haarlem.

The men arrested (who included van Tienen) were detained “on suspicion of belonging to a group which is a continuation of the pre-war Nationalist Socialist Beweging—an organization forbidden by law.” A royal decree issued by the Netherlands government in London during the war
banned all organizations that could be considered a continuation of the NSB. However, a court had to establish their Nazi character. Van Tienen disclaimed any connection with the pre-war NSB and announced that he would continue publishing and distributing his paper.

Reaction to Communist Anti-Semitism

The Prague trial and subsequent developments in Eastern Europe (see p. 263) aroused a certain nervousness among Dutch Jews. Enquiries about emigration possibilities jumped during the months December 1952 through March 1953, but then declined. (The number of registrations with the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society [HIAS] in January 1953 was 89 families [271 persons], in February 52 [149], in March 60 [190], in April 18 [39], in May 6 [18], and in June 11 [28].)

General Press

The Dutch press generally condemned the Prague trial and its aftermath. A notable exception was the leading political-cultural weekly De Groene Amsterdammer, which was widely read by Jews in Holland. This weekly argued that the policy of the Soviet block should not be construed as anti-Semitic, trying to explain it on a basis of the support given to Israel by American Jews, and Communist disappointment in the expectations of cooperation from Eastern European Jews. It also asserted that anti-Semitism was impossible in the Soviet Union, as it was forbidden by law.

Abel J. Herzberg, a past chairman of the Netherlands Zionist Federation and a well-known lawyer and author, published articles to this effect in De Groene Amsterdammer and in the Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad and the Joodse Wachter. Herzberg contended that the Zionists ought to concentrate on consolidating Israel and not indulge in anti-Communist propaganda, which might further endanger the position of Jews in Eastern Europe.

Jewish Press

The Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad on December 5 and 19, 1952, and the Joodse Wachter on December 5, 1952, challenged the views of De Groene Amsterdammer and Herzberg. However, Professor S. Kleerekoper warned Dutch Jews against anti-Communist groups that used the current experiences of the Jews in Eastern Europe for their own propaganda purposes. Himself a member of the Dutch Labor Party, he took particular issue with that party and condemned the pamphlet Pogrom, Praag, Moskou—Rusland, De Joden en de Vrede ("Russia, the Jews, and Peace"), written by J. de Kadt, himself of Jewish origin.

Zionist Reaction

On December 5, 1952, the Netherlands Zionist Federation published in the general press a protest against the anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish attacks made at the Prague trial, and stressed the need for a Zionist solution of the Jewish problem.
At its annual general meeting, held in Amsterdam on December 24-25, 1952, the executive of the Netherlands Zionist Federation submitted a resolution stating that "political Communism has declared war on the Jewish people, the Zionist movement, and the State of Israel," and calling on Zionists who were still members of Communist organizations or groups to resign their membership. Some speakers, particularly Herzberg, opposed this resolution. Seeing that the motion would not be carried unanimously, its sponsors withdrew it.

In April 1953, the executive of the Netherlands Zionist Federation decided, in view of the apparent relaxation of Communist anti-Semitism, to abandon its earlier decision to publish a pamphlet on this phenomenon in Eastern Europe.

**COMMUNIST COUNTERACTION**

The Communists indulged in anti-Zionist and anti-Israel charges in their daily *De Waarheid*, through their representatives in the Second Chamber and Municipal Councils, and at public meetings. *De Waarheid* not only published full accounts of the Prague trial and the charges against the Moscow doctors, but also several other anti-Zionist and anti-Israel feature articles.

*De Waarheid* also reprinted in extenso the London Daily Worker interview with the chief rabbi of Prague. The Communist Party sent a pamphlet on this subject to all members of the Jewish congregation councils in all parts of Holland. On the occasion of Passover, the latter also received from the Legation of the Hungarian People's Republic in Holland a pastoral message on "The Blessing of Peace" over the signature of the Hungarian Orthodox Chief Rabbi, Josef Citron. The letter spoke of the full equality and freedom of religion which the Jews enjoyed in Hungary, the complete absence of anti-Semitism, and the measures taken by the Hungarian government to enable the Jews to fulfill their religious duties during Passover. Chief Rabbi Citron urged Jews abroad to raise their voice against "the imperialist warmongers" and join the camp of "the eight hundred million lovers of peace."

The Communists also gave extensive coverage to the attack on the Soviet Embassy in Tel Aviv on February 9, 1953. *De Waarheid* mentioned briefly and without comment the resumption of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union on July 20, 1953.

Among those Communist leaders in Holland who defended Prague and attacked Israel and Zionism were some Jews, especially the secretary general of the Netherlands Communist Party Paul de Groot. He published a pamphlet on the subject in the form of an open letter to the Jewish Labor Municipal Councillor of Amsterdam, B. Sajet. At a meeting of the Council Sajet had refuted the anti-Zionist charges of his Communist colleague Henk Gortzak (a non-Jew.)

**POLAK AFFAIR**

On March 7 B. S. Polack, a Jewish physician who had been a Communist
member of both the Amsterdam Municipal Council and the Provincial Estates of North Holland, was ordered by his party to resign both seats. In a lengthy statement that appeared in *De Waarheid* of March 7, 1953, Polak was accused of inciting party members of Jewish origin against the party leadership and the Soviet Union, of daring to spread doubts regarding the correctness of the reports issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union about "the crimes of the American-hired assassins in doctors' garb," and of maintaining close connection with American agents. A few weeks later, Polak was officially expelled from the Communist Party. He recanted and was readmitted in November 1953.

Another prominent Dutch Communist of Jewish descent, the lawyer Benno J. Stokvis, a member of the Second Chamber from 1946 to 1952, resigned from the party in October 1952.

**Communists as Champions of the Jews**

All this did not prevent the Dutch Communists from attempting to appear as the champions of Jewish interests in Holland. Thus, Communist members asked questions in the Second Chamber about the disappearance of the two Jewish war orphans, and protested against the rejection by the crown of the Amsterdam Municipal Sunday Shop Closing by-law, which would have allowed local Jewish shopkeepers who closed on the Sabbath to remain open until 5 P. M. on Sundays.

As during previous years, the Communists tried to exploit the annual commemoration of the strike of the Amsterdam workers on February 25, 1941, against the first deportations of Jews in Holland and the increasingly violent Nazi measures. On February 24, 1953, the chairmen of the six other parliamentary parties published a joint communique strongly condemning this Communist exploitation. The Communists, they said, had less right than ever to boast of their protest against the suppression of freedom of religion and against racial discrimination and dictatorship of the mind at a time when Jews were again being persecuted for being Jews and spiritual freedom was nonexistent behind the Iron Curtain. The Communist claim was an offense to the spirit of the strikers of 1941.

**Population**

The Jewish population of the Netherlands during the period under review was about 26,000. The largest number lived in Amsterdam. Despite the many departures of Jews from Amsterdam, the Ashkenazic community rose from 5,000 to 5,500 members, of an estimated total Jewish population of 11,000 in Amsterdam.

No immigration of Jews took place. Most of the Jews living in the Netherlands had been born there, or had been living there before World War II. The naturalization of the latter was progressing satisfactorily, though it remained an individual and lengthy process. The 500 Jewish DP's admitted after the war had almost all left for overseas countries.
Community Organization and Coordination

At its meeting of February 22, 1953, the Ashkenazic Centrale Commissie of Netherland Jews appealed to the Portuguese Congregation to agree to "organizational cooperation in fields of general Jewish interest." The Portuguese Congregation, with only a few hundred members, had always acted independently and often without any consultation with the very much larger Ashkenazic community, both in its relations with the government and in official statements to the press, often taking a different stand on matters of general Jewish interest. The appeal remained unanswered.

Neither did the Permanente Commissie make much further progress in its appeal to various Jewish social welfare and other organizations to recognize its authority, to submit annual financial reports to it, and to coordinate their activities.

For the first time since the war, the executive of the Centrale Commissie presented a balanced budget (for the year 1953-54), though estimates for expenditure and income were about F 25,000 ($650,000) higher than for the previous year. On May 28, 1953, it formally abolished the three-centuries-old institution of "nonmatriculated members," who by paying a special additional fee enjoyed certain privileges, such as eligibility for certain offices and the right of burial at the "distinguished" cemetery of the community at Muiderberg.

Civic Status

The National Sunday Shop Closing Act, which had been passed in May 1952, went into force on October 1, 1952 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 272). In November 1952 the Amsterdam Municipal Council, at the request of the local Jewish community, unanimously passed a by-law which allowed local shopkeepers closing on the Sabbath to remain open on Sundays till 6 P.M. However, in May the Crown refused its approval. The secretary general of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, G. J. Veldkamp, stated that he could see no "special circumstances" why these shops should remain open until 6 P.M. on Sundays.

Religious Activity

In July 1952 Holland had four Ashkenazic rabbis with a full rabbinical degree, headed by Chief Rabbi Tal.

The Ashkenazic Rabbinical and Teachers Seminary had several pupils, all of whom were, however, studying for a teacher's degree and none for a rabbinical degree. The Sephardic Rabbinical Seminary had but one pupil.

The Centrale Commissie decided at its meeting of January 25, 1953, to reduce the number of ressorts (rabbinical districts) from twelve to three or four. Before the war each of these ressorts—roughly coinciding with the eleven provinces of the Netherlands—had had its own chief rabbi who had had sole jurisdiction in religious matters in his district. At present a num-
ber of these chief rabbinates were vacant and others were occupied by one of the Amsterdam rabbis, acting as chief rabbi ad interim. Qualified persons were lacking to fill all the vacancies, and very small congregations in most districts did not justify full-time appointments.

A positive achievement of the year was the appointment in April 1953 of an official for pastoral contact work in the provinces, to visit localities where no Jewish religious guidance existed in any form. As in previous years, a number of Jewish communities sold synagogues and other property. To replace synagogues destroyed during World War II, new synagogues were opened in Zaandam and in Deventer. In Rotterdam a large new center, with synagogue, meeting hall, and other community facilities, was under construction.

Jewish Education

Jewish education in the provinces was carried on where necessary by itinerant teachers in the service of the Centrale Commissie. Written lessons were also provided. Every Jewish child in any village whose parents wanted it to receive Jewish education could do so. However, in view of the traveling involved and the very small number of teachers available for such work, the number of hours given was necessarily small. During the period under review, for the first time the oldest pupils sat for a central examination.

The part-time one-year training course for Jewish youth leaders which the Amsterdam Jewish community had established a few years before was discontinued during the year under review.

Social Services

The new building of the old age home De Joodse Invalide was opened on October 23, 1953. The institution, privately run and supported, had been housed before the war in a large modern building, which had become far too large for the present number of occupants. The building was sold to the Amsterdam municipality. The former Portuguese hospital, which was also standing empty, was let to De Joodse Invalide, which at considerable expenditure reconverted it into a model old age home for ninety people. At its annual meeting in June, however, the Board reported a large uncovered deficit.

Another old age home in Amsterdam, Beth Shalom, was to be reopened in the autumn of 1953 for paying guests, and so was a similar home at The Hague.

Culture

Cultural meetings organized by the Ashkenazic Jewish community of Amsterdam were discontinued during the year, as attendance had been very poor. Its Cultural Commission continued its half-hour monthly or bi-
monthly broadcasts started in 1951 in cooperation with the Labor Broadcast-
ing System (VARA).

The Genootschap voor de Joodse Wetenschap organized some lectures for
its members. It succeeded in having some objects of Jewish historical inter-
est in Amsterdam salvaged and given a dignified place.

The most important cultural influence was the weekly Nieuw Israelitisch
Weekblad, which devoted much space to general Jewish affairs and culture
as well as to local affairs.

Abel J. Herzberg, a former chairman of the Netherlands Zionist Federa-
tion, received the Jan Campert Prize for the best work on wartime resist-
ance, for his chapters dealing with the history of the persecution of the Jews
during the Nazi occupation of Holland in the survey Onderdrukking en
Verzet ("Oppression and Resistance").

Adriaan van der Veen, a non-Jew, was awarded the 1953 Van der Hoogt
Prize by the Netherlands Academy for Literature for his novel Het Wilde
Feest (The Wild Feast), which dealt with social anti-Semitism in Dutch and
American circles in New York City during the war.

Other books of Jewish interest were: De Gouden Kroon van Beieren
("The Gold Crown of Bavaria") by Sam Goudsmit, a novel on Jewish perse-
cutions in the Middle Ages; Verzamelde Gedichten ("Collected Poems") by
Jacob Israel de Haan (1882-1924), including several that had never been
published before, by the well-known Dutch Jewish poet who was killed in
Jerusalem in 1924; Zeven maanden concentratiekamp ("Seven Months of
Concentration Camp"), by J. A. Hemelrijk; De Boodschap van Israel ("The
Message of Israel"), by Henri van Praag, a comprehensive but very subjec-
tive survey of Jewish contributions to civilization; and Jezus en Menacheem
by Siegfried van Praag, a novel describing the story of Jesus through Jewish
eyes. J. A. Nederbragt, first Netherlands Minister to Israel, published Jeru-
salem, indien ik U vergete ("Jerusalem, Lest I Forget Thee"), a diary of his
experiences in Israel from 1948 to the end of 1950, strongly pro-Israel, and
also strongly Calvinistic. Bertus Aafjes's Verstin onder de Volkeren ("Prin-
cess Among the Nations"), was a travel account of the Holy Land. In Een volk
op weg naar huis ("A People On Its Way Home"), J. H. Grolle, a Dutch-
Protestant missionary among the Jews, told about his travels in Israel.

Personalia

On November 23, Albert van Raalte, conductor of the Hilversum Radio
Philharmonic Orchestra for twenty-five years, died. Under the German occu-
pation in 1941, he had been conductor of the Jewish Orchestra, which was
allowed to perform for Jews only and only Jewish compositions.

On January 25, 1953, David M. Lopez Cardozo died. Until shortly before
his death he had been chairman of the Portuguese Amsterdam Community
Council.

Henriette Boas
Switzerland

The political, economic, and social situation of Switzerland during the period covered (June 1952 to July 1953) continued stable.

Jewish Population

The Swiss population of approximately 4,500,000 included some 20,000 Jews, who formed less than one-half of one per cent of the total. They were distributed among the major cities, particularly Zurich, Basel, Berne, Lausanne, Lucerne, St. Gall, and La-Chaux-de-Fonds. For the most part they were wholesale merchants, textile dealers and manufacturers, watchmakers, artisans, storekeepers, physicians, lawyers, and teachers. Their number was steadily declining: because their birth rate was even lower than that of the general population, while their death rate was higher; because immigration had been almost completely stopped; and because mixed marriages formed about 60 per cent of the total marriages.

Emigration and Immigration

Aside from the great influx of refugees in connection with World War II (and these left after the end of hostilities), Switzerland had experienced very little in the way of immigration or emigration since the end of World War I. Most of the 1,800 Jewish ex-refugees in Switzerland, both those who were self-supporting and those who received relief, possessed the right of asylum, i.e., of settlement. During 1952 about 150 former refugees and emigrants, of whom 124 were receiving relief, left Switzerland as emigrants, as repatriates, or as "transients." Of these, fifty-seven went to the United States, twenty-three to Israel, twenty-two to Canada, and twelve to Austria. In addition, about a dozen chalutzim—native and foreign—went to Israel. Some seven hundred former refugees were supported by the Verband Schweizerische Jüdische Flüchtlingshilfen (VSJF), which was under the direction of the Schweizerischer Israelitische Gemeindebund (SIG), with headquarters in Zurich. Most of the emigration to the United States was financed by PEP funds, by ICEM through the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), and by the police division of Berne. Emigration to Israel was financed by the Jewish Agency in Geneva. The emigration of former tuberculosis patients to Israel was made dependent on a guarantee from the JDC-sponsored Malben program. The attitude of the general and Jewish press, public opinion, the political parties, church circles, trade unions, and welfare organizations had brought about a liberal approach toward the civil status of the former refugees, and in general of the numerous stateless persons living in Switzerland.
Civic and Political Status

The Jews of Switzerland, 70 per cent of whom were citizens, enjoyed full equality before the law. Naturalization, which before and during World War II had been very difficult, especially for Jews, was, in accordance with public opinion, now granted on an individual basis, but rather generously. Zionist activity was no obstacle to integration of Jews in Switzerland.

Discrimination and Anti-Semitism

While there was no official discrimination against Jews in Switzerland, the situation had certain negative aspects. Few Jews were to be found in the civil service, in the great financial institutions, in large industrial concerns, in the press, in the radio, or in the higher ranks of the army. Socially, Jews were still barred from membership in a respected football club in Zurich.

The remnants of the members of the Nazi Front, most of whom appeared to have found a home in the anti-Semitic People’s Party, published anti-Jewish bulletins in German and French. A Catholic publishing company brought out an anti-Semitic book by the Englishman Douglas Reed, under the title Der Grosse Plan der Anonymen. This book, like other anti-Semitic literature, was intended for export to Germany. In the absence of a legal basis, it was impossible to stop the importation of such neo-Nazi anti-Semitic pamphlets as those of the Swedish Einar Aberg or the distribution of anti-Semitic publications of French origin, which found a certain market in Western Switzerland. The Amis de Robert Brasillach, the French anti-Semitic “martyr” devotee of the Vichy regime and worshipper of Hitler, celebrated an annual requiem mass in French Switzerland.

Incidents

An anti-Semitic outrage by a Zurich physician against a Jewish woman aroused public anger; he was convicted in court and suspended by the military authorities from his post as a captain in the medical corps. A Swiss pro-Nazi, who had previously asserted that the Nazi regime had been financed by American Jewish financiers, lost a libel suit with anti-Semitic overtones against a writer for the democratic National-Zeitung.

Harlan Films

It was impossible to prevent the showing of the American film on Ernst Rommel, which idealized the German generals, or of the film Oliver Twist, which aroused anti-Semitic feeling. On the other hand, the announcement of plans to present one of Veit Harlan’s films led to the formation, on the initiative of the Swiss Committee of Christians and Jews, of an Action

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1 In 1951.
2 October 24, 1952.
3 The libel suit was decided against René Sowderreger, the pro-Nazi, on November 5, 1961.
4 February 1, 1952.
Committee Against the Exhibition of Harlan Films. This committee included representatives of almost all political parties, non-Jewish religious and cultural groups, trade unions, artistic and academic bodies, and of the SIG and other Jewish groups. This induced the authorities to take an unequivocal position against the showing of this film. In this connection, special mention should be given to the part played by Hamburg Senate Director Erich Lueth, initiator of the Peace with Israel movement and the first to take up the fight against the Harlan films. Lueth held a press conference and made speeches, including one over the radio, in which he expressed the thanks of German democrats for the moral help given them in their fight against the Harlan film.

Reaction to Communist Anti-Semitism

The Slansky trial in Prague, and later the accusations against Zionist and Jewish organizations and the Jewish doctors in Moscow (see p. 263), aroused widespread public anger, except in the insignificant Communist press. The editors of the Fédération Sioniste de Suisse's organ Das Neue Israel were condemned by Zionist authorities for publishing an article which, rejecting the Slansky trial, yet felt that the considerations that had moved the Czech Communist leaders to hold the trial were partly understandable.

Reaction to Finaly Affair

The Finaly Affair also created a great impression in Switzerland. With only a few exceptions, almost the whole press and public opinion took a lively and sympathetic interest in the tragic fate of the children. Numerous Jewish organizations sent resolutions to the Swiss Catholic dignitaries and to the International Committee of the Red Cross calling for the return of the children to their relatives.

Defense

The SIG'S press service Juna took a particularly active part in the fight against anti-Semitic manifestations. It kept the Swiss public informed about the situation of the Jews throughout the world and exposed anti-Semitic tendencies in its French and German language bulletins, describing the activities of world Nazi forces. SIG explained the facts about the still unresolved problem of heirless Jewish property in Switzerland. Its bulletins assisted the democratic forces in Germany in combating anti-Semitism. By means of the Swiss news agency it was able to stamp as baseless, on a basis of its own investigations, the report of a foreign news agency that an "organization of Jewish partisans" in Switzerland had been responsible for the attempt to assassinate Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. SIG also maintained a very extensive archive, and worked closely with the Committee of Christians and Jews and other interfaith organizations like the World Brotherhood, various church and political circles and individuals, and the press.
Community Organization and Communal Affairs

Founded in 1904, SIG had twenty-six communities affiliated with it, three small communities remaining outside. The members of the communities affiliated with SIG included some whose ancestors were long settled in Switzerland; others whose families had immigrated from Germany and France toward the end of the nineteenth century, like the Alsatians; and East European and Balkan Jews who had immigrated to Switzerland before and during World War I. The relations among these various groups were good; nevertheless the members of the older generation still retained organizational and social differences in respect to religion and education. There was some tendency toward communal unification, as a result of the decline of the Jewish population, the decreasing consciousness of religious distinctions, and the influence of Zionism in smoothing out differences.

SIG was considered by the government authorities as the official representative of the Jews, on political as well as religious questions; the same was true of the local communities in their own areas. Relations with the authorities were friendly. The SIG attended to the religious needs of soldiers and prisoners, and supported the publication of High Holy Day prayer books and the Bible with a German translation, as well as the publication of a prayer book in the German language in Braille. It also provided for religious instruction in isolated places by supplying itinerant teachers. At its last session it decided to install in the slaughterhouse of St. Louis (France) an apparatus for the humane slaughtering of animals, in accordance with the requirements of Jewish law. There had been recent articles in the press for and against the abolition of the prohibition against ritual slaughter.

The Jewish community of Geneva celebrated its hundredth birthday, and that of Zurich its fiftieth, in 1952. All the Jewish communities had their own synagogue buildings, and some had modern community centers which housed the offices, schoolrooms, meeting halls, and clubs. These centers supported an intensive cultural and communal activity on the part of the Jewish population.

FINANCES

The yearly collection for refugees and postwar assistance netted about 340,000 Swiss francs ($80,000) in 1952. SIG's own budget was covered by the dues paid to it by its affiliated communities, whose membership included about 4,000 families. SIG subsidized the 1,400-member Maccabi sports organization, the vacation camps of the various youth organizations (except for Hashomer Hatzair), the publication of a central catalogue of all Judaica and Hebraica in Switzerland, the Omanut society for the encouragement of Jewish art and music, and an archive for Jewish history and art.

Jewish Education

All the Swiss Jewish communities conducted their own religious schools, some also admitting the children of nonmembers. Instruction was usually...
given at times when the secular schools were not in session. The curriculum usually included prayers, Jewish religious customs and practices, Hebrew, Jewish history, and preparation for bar mitzvah. It was planned to permit only those children who could show that they had attended religious schools to be bar mitzvah. Extracurricular festivities on Jewish and national holidays, and at the end of terms, were popular. In some communities there were also special youth religious services. The number of students at the schools was more or less stationary and rather small, though no fees were charged. Instruction was imparted by the rabbis, cantors, and well-paid professional teachers. The languages of instruction were German in German Switzerland and French in the French part of the country. In some communities there were also courses for youths released from school, and Hebrew courses for adults. With the founding of the State of Israel, the teaching of Hebrew and education in a more national spirit increased in extent and intensiveness. There was a strong tendency toward the use of the Sephardic pronunciation in the traditional prayers. Since state and church were separate in Switzerland, and there was no compulsory religious instruction in the public schools, the instruction in these schools gave no occasion for disagreement. The religious schools were conducted in the community houses, and met all modern technical and hygienic requirements. In addition there were an educational institute in Aix-les-Bains, the Yeshiva Es Chaim in Mont, which recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, and a more recently established Yeshiva in Lugano. All of these were privately operated. The total religious school enrollment was between 800 and 1,000; total Yeshiva enrollment was 57.

Religious Life

Aside from their synagogues and religious schools, all the communities had cemeteries, and many of them also possessed meat markets (partly on a cooperative basis) and ritual bath houses. The Jewish community of Zurich dedicated a second cemetery in 1952, with the erection of a monument to the six million Jewish martyrs of World War II. The salaries of rabbis, cantors, teachers, and the synagogue and cemetery staffs, as well as the cost of upkeep of facilities, were paid by the communities out of their regular membership dues, burial charges to nonmembers, and special drives. Most Swiss Jews were Conservative, with some Liberal and some highly Orthodox. All tendencies were represented in the associations of rabbis, cantors, and teachers.

Zionism and Relations with Israel

In the elections to the World Zionist Congress of 1950, about 5,000 shekels were sold and about 2,500 shekelholders took part in the voting. About 800 votes went to the General Zionists, 700 to the Orthodox Mizrachi, 400 to the Labor Poale Zion, and 200 to the pro-Communist Mapam. Of the three delegates to the Congress, one was General Zionist, one Mizrachi, and one Poale Zion. Actually only a fraction of this number of persons were organ-
ized Zionists. All local Zionist organizations, youth groups, parties, and funds were represented in the Fédération Suisse. (There was also a negligible number of Revisionists.)

The Women’s International Zionist Organization (WIZO) had about 2,000 members in twenty-six local groups (including two youth groups), or about one-fourth of all the Jewish women of Switzerland. There were also some Mizrahi women’s groups. The relatively well organized Orthodox Agudas Israel, a national organization, together with its youth leagues, conducted its own collections for Israel, cultural purposes, and the needy. There were no Jewish Communist groups in Switzerland, nor were there any branches of the Jewish Socialist Bund.

Fund Raising

The fund-raising body Aktion Israel 5712, supported by the SIG and Agudas Israel, raised about 800,000 Swiss francs ($190,000). The Keren Kayemeth, which since its separation from the major Israel campaign had confined itself to its “traditional” fund raising, raised about 140,000 Swiss francs ($33,000); its legacies amounted to about 120,000 ($28,000). The Keren Kayemeth was actively engaged in negotiating loans from banks and industries for the financing of imports to Israel. WIZO raised 123,000 francs from a special drive which entailed almost no expense, and 76,000 from the budget pledges of its local groups, making a total of about 200,000 francs ($46,000). In the Israel campaign the various Zionist parties and religious groups had definite quotas. In addition, there were collections of clothes, medicine, and gift packages for the storm victims in Israel, carried out by the women’s organizations and supported by all groups. Les Amis de l’Université Hébraïque de Jérusalem collected books for that university. In connection with World Children’s Day on October 5, 1953, there was an intensive collection for the Swiss Children’s village in Israel, Kiryath Yearim. The Red Cross contributed 40,000 francs ($9,130) for the erection of a clinic there. SIG, which supported every aid campaign for Israel, abstained from taking any more political positions in connection with Israel.

There was a Hebrew seminary in Zurich for adults, as well as Zionist youth groups of all tendencies, which conducted vacation camps. During the period 1951-53 some twenty young people had gone to Israel and about a dozen had pledged themselves to a year of service in Israel. Lecturers from Israel spoke on cultural, literary, and Zionist questions, as well as economic problems related to Israel. Israel films were shown, and plays performed in German translation. There were about 300 Israelis in Switzerland for various purposes, about half of them students, but their influence was scarcely noticeable. Public opinion was sympathetic to developments in Israel, but the authorities avoided taking any position.

Social Services

In Switzerland, with its advanced system of social welfare, Jewish social services were highly developed. The sanatorium Etania in Davos and the Association Israëlite “Proleysin” did much for indigent tuberculosis patients.
The Swiss OSE had opened a preventorium at Morgins. At the central ORT institute in Anières about sixty students from Israel, North Africa, and other countries were trained in various trades so that they could become instructors in the various ORT schools. The League of Jewish Women's Clubs supported a children's home in Heiden. The women's clubs which existed in every city engaged in many types of welfare work. The Swiss Jewish old people's home at Lengnau, whose foundation was materially assisted by the Guggenheim family that had emigrated to the United States, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. In addition there was an old people's home in Basel, as well as two under the supervision of the VSJF in Vevey and Lugano.

The VSJF had spent about 66,000,000 francs ($16,280,000) for aid to refugees and postwar relief in the twenty years of its activity in this field. (See Table 1 below.) The income of the VSJF for 1952 was about 2,250,000 francs ($517,000). (See Table 2 below.) The Swiss government and the cantons financed half of the cost, and the contribution of the JDC equalled the total of all other private contributions. The total number of persons supported was less than 700, including 470 old people of both sexes who lived in the homes previously mentioned. The expenditures for the various forms of aid to refugees and emigres—permanent asylum, postwar help, transients, and local welfare work—and administration, came to about 2,220,000 francs ($510,600).

**TABLE 1**

**INCOME OF THE VERBAND SCHWEIZERISCHE JUDISCHER FLUCHTLINGSHILFEN (VSJF), 1932-52**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount (in francs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal government &amp; cantons</td>
<td>9,640,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of general collections</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDC</td>
<td>35,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Jewish collections</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity contributions</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Jewish organizations (mainly HIAS)</td>
<td>4,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources</td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66,000,000</strong> ($16,000,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2**

**INCOME OF VERBAND SCHWEIZERISCHE JUDISCHER FLUCHTLINGSHILFEN (VSJF), 1952**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount (in francs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JDC</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal government</td>
<td>850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantons</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIG</td>
<td>340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Central Office for Refugee Aid</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss European Aid</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central British Fund</td>
<td>26,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Jewish Welfare Fund</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources</td>
<td>56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,250,000</strong> ($515,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the end of 1944 there were about 115,000 refugees in Switzerland, of whom an estimated 25,000 were Jews. For 1952, the corresponding figures were 10,000 and 2,500. In 1944 the VSJF helped 23,267 and financially supported 9,700; in 1952 the figures were 1,735 and 707 respectively. It was hoped to incorporate refugee and postwar aid into the sphere of activity of the individual communities, but there were still difficulties in the way of this. A greater diminution in the need for relief work was expected to result from the restitution payments of Germany and Austria, which might under certain circumstances be transferred to Switzerland.

The Verband Jüdischer Studenten in der Schweiz (VJSS) gave scholarships to nineteen gifted students. It raised its funds, aside from a JDC subsidy, from collections. During the period under review the only Jewish hospital, founded half a century before in Basel, was closed, as was the Jewish sanatorium Tel-Or in Davos.

Cultural Activities

A number of organizations were active in the field of Jewish literature, art, and music. In the field of Yiddish letters and culture, there were the Peretz Verein in Zurich and the Cercle de Culture Juive of Geneva. The singing club Hasomir in Zurich devoted itself to Jewish folk songs and synagogue music. In Zurich and Geneva the Omanut society for the encouragement of Jewish art and music was active. The archive for Jewish history and art held exhibitions of Jewish ornamental art. There were also cultural lectures and discussions of themes relating to Jews or to Israel held under the auspices of the cultural sections of some communities, B'nai B'rith lodges, general and Zionist societies, WIZO and other women's groups, student clubs and youth organizations. Theatrical productions were put on in Yiddish, German, and occasionally French. Two of them were noteworthy: Stefan Zweig's Jeremiah and the first German performance of a piece by Max Brod on present-day Israel, translated from the Hebrew. The Bible and Jewish philosophy were studied in German and in the original in the Seminaire Suisse des Hautes Sciences Juives et Ecole Rabbinique and under the auspices of the society "Fur ein Jüdischer Lehrhaus." At the University of Geneva and the commercial high school of St. Gall local rabbis lectured on Jewish history and philosophy. The Yiddish societies already mentioned held memorial meetings on the occasion of the death of Abraham Reisen, and the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Y. L. Peretz; there was a celebration of the revolt of the Warsaw Ghetto, in which all sections of the Jewish community took part. The Chug Ivri of Geneva had published three volumes on contributions to the history and sociology of the Jews in Switzerland. The SIG supported cultural and literary activities financially and offered an art prize of 5,000 francs for the occasion of its fiftieth jubilee in 1954. The religious scholar Martin Buber lectured at the University of Zurich; some of his works were brought out or reprinted by Swiss publishers. Other books published included A la mémoire de Chaim Weizmann by William Rappard.
and Einstein und die Schweiz by Clark Seelig. Hashomer Hatzair put on a successful exhibition of Jewish folklore and ghetto struggles.

**PERIODICALS**

Periodicals appearing in German were the fifty-three year old Israelitische Wochenblatt of Zurich, the fortnightly Jüdische Rundschau Maccabi of Basel, and the monthly Das Neue Israel of Zurich. All these had French supplements. La Tradition was published in Geneva in French by the Mizrachi. In addition there were a number of internal Zionist, Agudist, and youth publications, mostly roneographed and addressed almost entirely to the groups concerned.

**Personalia**

Deaths during the year included the veteran Zionist National Councillor David Farbstein of Zurich, and Camille Levy of Biel, both of whom took part in the first World Zionist Congress in 1897; Rabbi Tobias Lowenstein of Zurich, a member of the rabbinical council of Agudas Israel in Switzerland and well-known for his fight against calendar reform; Robert Guggenheim of Lucerne, long president of the national organization of Agudas Israel; Leo Polinsky of Geneva, leader of Mapam in Switzerland; Charles Piccard, long president of the Jewish community of Biel and a co-founder of SIG; Hans Ornstein of Zurich, the conscientious and energetic secretary of the Swiss Committee of Christians and Jews; and the president of the Swiss Jewish Old People’s Home at Lengnau, Louis Brandeis.

FRANCOIS BRUNSWIG

**ITALY**

The Italian general elections of June 1953 seriously upset the balance of political power. The record number of votes cast was split almost exactly in half between the center parties (Christian Democrats, Saragat Social Democrats, Liberals, and Republicans) on one side and the extremists of the Left and Right (Communists, Nenni [left-wing] Socialists, Monarchists and the neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano) on the other. The greatest gains were made by the Monarchist party, led by Achille Lauro, and the Communists, who secured more than 22 per cent of the total vote. The neo-Fascists suffered a slight numerical setback compared with the results in the 1952 provincial elections, but gained greatly in political influence through their twenty-nine seats in the new chamber of deputies. Among the new Movimento Sociale Italiano deputies were several Fascist ex-ministers, ex-diplomats, high party officials, and Giorgio Almirante, an anti-Semitic propaganda expert. The slight decrease in the Italian Social Movement’s vote came as a surprise to observers.
In March 1953 Italian college and university students elected a majority of moderate candidates to the executive of their national representative organization (eighty-seven Catholics and sixty-nine Liberals against thirty-five neo-Fascists, twenty Communists and six Monarchists).

Although the number of the unemployed had decreased by several hundred thousand, from 2,000,000 to about 1,800,000, and government sources claimed a marked improvement in Italy's economic situation, election results reflected deep popular distrust of the government's economic policies. This was particularly true in the peninsula's southern provinces, where both Communist and neo-Fascist gains were greatest and where the standard of living was the lowest.

Jewish Population

A survey made by the Unione delle Comunità Israeliiche (Union of Italian Jewish Communities) in the winter of 1952-53 put the number of Jews who were members of the Italian communities at 29,564. This figure, however, did not include Jews not on community records, non-Italian Jews in transit or not definitively established, Jews living in small towns, and a number of female children whose fathers had failed to register them. Thus, the total number of Jews living in Italy could be estimated at between 32,000 and 33,000. There was no data available as to Jewish emigration and immigration after 1947. During the postwar years, a large number of non-Italian Jews had passed through the country on the way from North and Central Europe to Israel. This flow was now reduced to a mere trickle. Relatively few displaced Jews settled in Italy. There was no data available on mixed marriages but communal leaders agreed that they were increasing. Between January 1, 1948, and June 30, 1953, about 370 conversions and declarations of disassociation from Judaism were registered. The total number of Jews in Italy remained more or less stable during the period under review, losses through conversions and a slightly falling birthrate being made up by newcomers from abroad. As in the general Italian population, females were slightly more numerous than males.

Civic and Political Status

The Union of Italian Jewish Communities, under a law dating back to Fascist times, had the duty of safeguarding the interests of Italian Judaism, representing it before the central authorities, supervising the activities of the communities, preserving the Jewish heritage, disseminating Jewish culture, and maintaining contacts with Jewish bodies abroad. This law, written by Jewish legal experts at Benito Mussolini's request and enacted in 1930, practically limits state control to questions concerning the real estate of the communities and the Union of Communities. Apart from minor amendments, no responsible Italian Jewish leader desired any change in the law.
Anti-Semitic Activity

During the period under review (July 1, 1952, through June 30, 1953) no significant signs of anti-Semitism appeared in Italy. There were nevertheless some anti-Semitic comments in some Catholic parochial sheets, in the "big" independent press, and in some neo-Fascist publications. Even in the so-called progressive press, e.g., Avanti, criminals who happened to be of Jewish extraction were referred to in headlines as Jews. De Gasperi's government, from ministerial level down to rank-and-file officials, showed understanding for most requests and complaints voiced by Jewish representatives. Thus, in 1952 Education Minister Antonio Segni, by a last-minute special decree, postponed an examination originally set for Yom Kippur. The same minister, acting on a protest made by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities against a ritual murder story in a textbook in use in elementary schools in the Southern Tyrol, ordered the deletion of the pages in question and warned the publishing firm of legal sanctions if it failed to comply. From abroad, the Swedish Jew-baiter Einar Aberg sent his propaganda to addresses in Italy. When informed of this by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, the Swedish minister to Italy, Johan Beck-Friis, expressed his deep regret and promised to bring the fact to the notice of his government.

The Italian Foreign Ministry, informed by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities of the Syrian Consul's refusal in March 1953 to certify invoices for goods from a Jewish firm trading with Syria, declared on May 4, 1953, that it would protect Italian citizens against any religious or racial discrimination even though such action might damage its commercial relations with foreign countries. On diplomatic inquiry, the Syrian Consulate on April 8 declared that its action had been due to a misunderstanding.

Reaction to Communist Anti-Semitism

Both the Jewish community and non-Jewish Italian public opinion reacted sharply to news of anti-Semitism behind the Iron Curtain. The Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia and the charge of a Jewish doctors' plot in the Soviet Union were branded as anti-Semitic in numerous articles which appeared in the Italian Jewish and general press. In Rome several public rallies were held at which Jewish Communists sought to reassure their fellow travelers that these events were anti-Zionist, rather than anti-Semitic. The Union of Italian Jewish Communities issued instructions to its constituent bodies to preserve "strict neutrality" in "political" issues. It was in pursuance of this policy that it cabled appeals to Presidents Truman of the United States and Gottwald of Czechoslovakia pleading for clemency for Ethel and Julius Rosenberg and for the defendants in the Prague trials on November 21 and November 28, 1952, respectively. As throughout the world, the Communist and fellow-traveling press reacted to events in the Soviet sphere with a campaign against Zionism and the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).
Community Organization and Community Affairs

The period under review was marked by a complete return to normalcy in Jewish life after the solution of most problems created by the war and persecution. The Union of Italian Jewish Communities directed the major part of its effort and of its budget to the fight against increasing assimilation and the widespread apathy of Italian Jewry to Jewish life.

Cultural Activities

In view of the existence of many small communities scattered all over the peninsula, and the fact that most Italian Jews read Italian only, the Union carried on a long-range plan of cultural penetration through publications in Italian, sent free of charge to practically every Jewish home. Under the direction of Professor Dante Lattes, renowned Jewish scholar and the Union’s vice president, the weekly Aspetti e problemi dell’ Ebraismo was produced and books containing more than 700 pages published. Altogether, the cultural department of the Union had since 1947 produced five complete volumes of weekly cultural publications which were of a very high caliber, and published six complete books including three new ones—a total of about 3,300 pages.

Religious Life

The lack of rabbis and spiritual leaders was still keenly felt; the output of graduates from the rabbinical seminary was insignificant. In its meeting held in June 1953, the executive of the Associazione Insegnanti Ebrei d’Italia (Association of Jewish Teachers) urged the creation of a rabbinical seminary in Jerusalem where students from all over the world could enroll, returning to their communities with the title of hacham after graduating from a four-year rabbinical course and from the humanities faculty of the Hebrew University. Rabbi Paolo Nissim was called to Trieste by the Jewish community and was appointed to the Hebrew chair at the city’s university, bringing the number of Hebrew chairs at Italian universities to six. All salaries to professors were paid by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities.

In April 1953 Jewish leaders, Milanese municipal authorities, Israel diplomats and a crowd of rejoicing Jews attended the dedication ceremonies of the Milan synagogue, rebuilt on the site where Allied bombs had blasted it to rubble in 1944. Funds for its reconstruction were appropriated by the Italian government under the “Act for the Reconstruction of Non-Catholic Cultural Buildings”; the balance was raised among the local Jewish community. In an impressive ceremony held in Rome on October 16, 1952, which was attended by Mayor Salvatore Rebecchini, and representatives of the local civil and military administration, a monument to the memory of 2,091 Roman Jews, victims of Nazi deportation, was unveiled at the Verano cemetery.
Jewish Education

During the period under review, 1,028 children were enrolled in Italy's eight Jewish elementary and two junior high schools, not including students attending Talmud Torah and Sunday classes in the smaller communities. These schools were staffed by a total of 104 teachers, organized in the Association of Jewish Teachers. During the school-year 1952-53 the Almagià Seminary in Rome, where new teachers for Jewish schools were being trained, had an enrollment of fourteen students. All Jewish schools in Italy were sponsored and maintained by the Jewish communities, the state contributing a share to the teachers' salaries. The Union of Italian Jewish Communities printed textbooks for use in the third, fourth and fifth grades of Jewish elementary schools. The Union, together with the JDC which supplied 50 per cent of the funds, granted forty-two scholarships to needy Jewish university students during the period under review.

Social Service

The economic position of Italian Jewry was satisfactory in most communities. But in Rome, Leghorn, and Venice a group of utterly destitute Jewish families was dependent on welfare funds. Jewish social welfare work was financed by community taxation, fund-raising campaigns on a local level, JDC appropriations, and a 20 per cent share from the United Israel Campaign set apart for local Italian use. These funds were administered and spent by the smaller communities themselves, by specialized welfare bodies in the bigger centers, and by OSE-Italia and ORT-Italia on a national basis.

OSE gave medical care to children and adults in many ambulatory clinics and operated children's summer camps. The ORT provided technical and professional training to 1,625 students in forty-one courses given in nine cities. From the income of a trust fund, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities cared for twelve non-Italian hard-core cases, sheltered in Jewish old-age homes in Florence, Mantua, Milan, Rome, Trieste, Turin, and Venice.

Zionism and Relations with Israel

The 1953 Israel fund-raising campaign was launched on January 25. To symbolize the strong links between the Italian Jewish community and the State of Israel, in November 1952 sixty ancient Torah scrolls and several cases of other antique synagogue items, collected from several Italian communities, were shipped to Israel. In February 1953 the mayor of the Italian harbor city of La Spezia put at the disposal of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities a lot in the center of the town for a monument commemorating the dramatic adventures of the two Palestine-bound clandestine immigrant ships Fede and Fenice. The Italian Jewish community shared the
world-wide concern for the fate of the Finaly children in France and, through its spokesmen, intervened with the French ambassador in Rome in March 1953.

**Personalia**

During the period under review, the Jews of Italy mourned the death not only of two outstanding communal leaders, but also of a non-Jew, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (died December 1, 1952), dean of Italy's elder statesmen, who had been Italian premier at the time of the signature of the Balfour Declaration and an ardent supporter of Jewish aspirations. In January 1953 H. E. Ugo Foa died unexpectedly. An Italian supreme court general attorney, Foa had been president of the Rome Jewish community under the Nazi occupation during which the Germans levied a collective fine of fifty kilograms of gold on the community. During this period, when Jewish activities were forced underground, Foa had displayed extraordinary courage in his dealings with the Nazis and succeeded in hiding the priceless artistic treasures and manuscripts of the Rome Community.

Ignazio Massarek, vice president of the Federazione Giovanile Ebraica Italiana (Italian Jewish Youth Federation) and vice president of the Federazione Sionistica Italiana (Zionist Federation), considered one of the new generation of Jewish leaders, died in Rome of brain injuries at the age of twenty-eight on September 12, 1952. On October 6, 1952, Arnaldo Bonaventura, famous musicologist and prolific historical writer on musical subjects, died in Florence.

**TURKEY**

The period from July 1952 to July 1953 was a crucial one in the development of Turkish democracy. It saw the unmistakable expression of the diverse tendencies represented by the different parties. The Democratic Party, when it came to power, had included in its ranks many incompatible elements. Even certain reactionary forces had infiltrated under the banner of absolute liberty of conscience with which it had swept to victory in the elections of 1950. Subsequent developments led to the reaffirmation by the Democratic Party of its unequivocal opposition to reactionary tendencies and its firm intention to combat any group or party which attempted to use religion as a political instrument.

On the other hand, the National Party showed its sympathy for reactionary elements despite the protests and resignations of Kemalists among its members. It undoubtedly hoped to pick up the votes which the Populist Party and the Democratic Party had alienated by their strongly anticlerical attitude. The Populist Party, for its past, remained faithful to the reforms introduced under the Republic and supported the party in power in all the severe measures which it considered necessary in order to combat reactionary obscurantism.
Thus, in this period the Democratic government took a stand against all efforts to reverse or modify the Kemalist reforms, and on every occasion which presented itself it reaffirmed its adherence to the principle of liberty of conscience and its determination to prevent reactionary tendencies from developing and becoming active in political life. Certain major events led the Democratic Party to remove all possible doubt as to its republican convictions. But before this occurred, certain developments had already attracted the attention of the public and even caused some disquiet. From a number of quarters there had been attacks against Ataturk's legislation, many of them echoing—even if from a distance—the demands of the reactionaries. At the time of a regional congress of the Democratic Party (held at Corum) articles against the reforms of Ataturk appeared in an Anatolian paper over the signature of a Democratic deputy, Hasan Fehmi Istaogly. Anti-Semitic, antimasonic, and antireform attacks were carried on by the daily newspaper Büyük Doğu and particularly by its publisher, Necip Fazil Kısakürek. Similar attacks came from Har Adam and its editor Cevat Rifat Atılıhan, and were taken up by the reactionary magazine Serdengesti, edited by Osman Yiiksel. These three organs conducted a violent campaign against the daily Vatan, and in particular against its editor-in-chief Ahmet Emin Yalman, whom they accused of being a deunme (descendant of the followers of Sabbatai Zevi), and of being in the pay of the freemasons. Büyük Doğu was closed in September 1951, but it was probably as a result of these attacks that an attempt was made to assassinate Yalman at Malataya on November 22, 1952. This event made a deep impression on public opinion, since it was the first act of violence on the part of the reactionaries. The government acted swiftly and with determination. Twenty persons, including the would-be assassin himself, were arrested in connection with the attack. A quantity of documents was seized; in various parts of the country, including the cities of Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Samsoun, and Brousse, persons in contact with the organizers of the attempt were arrested and searches were made. The attack was considered to have been directed not merely against the person of Yalman but against freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and it was regarded as a terrorist act intended to undermine the social and legal order of the country. It was established that the conspirators were members of the secret society Büyük Doğu (founded by Necip Fazil Kiskürek) and of the suppressed Democratic Moslem Party (founded by Cevat Rifat Atılıhan), and that they had been in correspondence with Osman Yuksel. Thus these three individuals, who had already distinguished themselves by their reactionary and anti-Semitic writings, appeared to have played a leading part in the carrying out of the criminal act. They were quickly arrested on the charge of inciting to murder.

The offensive against reaction was likewise extended to the racist extreme right, whose activity centered in the Association of Nationalists, with more than eighty branches in Turkey. Founded in 1951, it included many teachers in its ranks, and had become a center of concentration for all elements of the extreme right. It defined national unity in terms of common historical and social origin, religion, traditions, morality, and language. Its general attitude was completely anti-Kemalist. The decision of the govern-
ment to suppress the Association of Nationalists, followed shortly afterwards by the resignation of Minister of Education Tewfik Ileri, was interpreted as a sign of the government's will to combat every extremist movement. Only the National Party criticized the measures taken against the Association of Nationalists.

Speaking at the Congress of the Democratic Party on January 18, 1953, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes declared the government's intention of combating political and religious reaction and Communism, and stressed that the chief opposition group, the Populist Party, completely supported the government in its fight "in defense of freedom." It was noted that the Prime Minister had not offered his hand to the National Party. Some time later, in June and July 1953, the activities of that party became suspect, and it appeared that elements from the Association of Nationalists and other politico-clerical elements had been carrying on their activity under its banner. At the same time as the ruling Democratic Party set about purging any of its members who had been involved in any sort of antidemocratic activities, it began to take action against some hundred obscurantist sheets. The newspaper Büyük Doğu was closed, the activity of the fanatical sect of the Ticanis was stopped, and the racism which had been threatening national unity was brought to a halt. Finally, the National Party, whose congress emphasized its reactionary and clerical character, was provisionally suppressed on July 8, 1953. A few days later the trial of those involved in the Malatya assassination attempt opened in Ankara, exciting great public interest.

Besides supporting the struggle against reaction, the Populist Party reaffirmed its adherence to the principles of statism and laicism. The ruling Democratic Party, firm in its support of the Atlantic Pact, used American aid to develop Turkey's armed forces to a level which her own economy could not support. Turkey remained a united and stable force in the troubled Near East.

Economic Growth

On the economic side, Turkey had great success in developing agricultural production. The wheat harvest rose from 500,000 tons to 3,000,000 in the period 1950-53. By 1956, twelve hydroelectric plants were to be completed; cement, metallurgical, and fertilizer production were also being increased. Artesian wells had brought drinking water to 39,000 villages, and by the end of 1954, 80,000 villages were to have electricity. Because of progress made under its regime, especially by the peasants, the Democratic Party looked forward with confidence to the elections of May 1954.

Foreign Policy

Turkey's close relations with Yugoslavia and Greece bore fruit during the period under review in the Ankara pact (ratified April 29, 1953), strengthening the position of the West in the Balkans. In the question of a Middle Eastern pact, the Western powers appeared to have accepted the Turkish
position that a period of preparation was necessary before setting up a
defense system for the area, in order to establish stability and bring about
peace between Israel and the Arab states, since the participation of all the
countries of the area was indispensable. Meanwhile, the strengthening of
its naval and air forces and the efficient use of American aid had made Tur-
key the most solid bastion of democracy and Western civilization in this part
of the world.

Turkey attached a high value to the friendship of the Arab states. It was
disturbed by the Communist activity, combined with anti-Turkish propa-
ganda, which was being carried on in those countries. Prime Minister Adnan
Menderes and Foreign Minister Fuat Kopru1 went to Bagdad for the corona-
tion of King Faisal. But the imperialist aims of the Syrian dictator Adeb
Shishekli, who envisioned a pan-Islamic empire beginning at the Taurus,
had aroused much disapproval in the Turkish press. Turkey greeted with
satisfaction the abdication of King Farouk of Egypt on July 26, 1952, and
welcomed Mohammed Naguib's moderation in respect to the realization of
his national aspirations. In general, the Turks criticized the Arabs for lack-
ing a sense of realism, particularly in regard to their relations with Israel.
At the same time, they asked Israel to be more conciliatory to the Arabs, in
gard to the refugees. In the words of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on
February 23, 1953, Turkey asked both parties to show “mutual under stand-
ing,” and advocated a quick solution on a mutually satisfactory basis of
Israel-Arab differences.

The Turkish press commented favorably on German reparations to Israel
and Jewish victims of Nazism. It condemned the Prague trial, and especially
its anti-Semitic character, and emphasized that its purpose was to turn the
attention of the Czechs from their economic difficulties by using the Jews
as scapegoats, and to win the sympathy of the Arabs for Russia. It took a
similar position in regard to the arrest of the Jewish doctors in Moscow and
the wave of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, and advanced the hypothesis
that the primary purpose of the Russians was to please the Arab countries in
connection with an intensification of activity there. The Turkish press
printed articles eulogizing President Chaim Weizmann of Israel at the time
of his death in November 1952. Turks were very much moved when, in the
following month, the Ataturk Forest was dedicated in Israel, and the press
commented warmly on it.

Relations Between Turkey and Israel

The benevolent attitude of the Turkish authorities toward Jewish immi-
gration to Israel from Iran placed Turkey among the countries whose gen-
erous assistance had made mass immigration to Israel possible.

Turkey was actively working for a rapid improvement in relations between
Israel and the Arab countries, as an essential prerequisite for the creation of
a defensive system for the Middle East. Despite protests from the Arab gov-
ernments, it continued to maintain close commercial relations with Israel.
Turkey supplied Israel chiefly with cereals, other foods, and cattle for breed-
ing; in return, Israel sent industrial products, such as electric refrigerators,
automobiles, tires, and cement. One of the biggest Turkish industrialists, Vehbi Koc, visited Israel in the course of the year and published an article in an economic journal praising the economic development of that country and advocating the active development of trade between the two nations.

Israel’s participation in the international fair at Izmir in August 1952 attracted much favorable attention in the Turkish press. The fifth anniversary of the foundation of the state was warmly greeted by Turkish commentators. Turkish public opinion was particularly stirred when Israel sent clothing, medicine, and other aid by special plane to the victims of the earthquake in the Yinece region of western Anatolia on March 23 and 25, 1953.

Jewish Population

There were about 50,000 Jews in Istanbul (41,000 belonging to the Sephardic community and 9,000 to the Ashkenazic), 6,000 in Izmir, 5,000 in Ankara, and 1,000 in the smaller communities, making a total of 60,000 Jewish residents in Turkey, out of a general population of about 21,000,000.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, 35,000 Turkish Jews had migrated there, the majority of them in 1951-53. The Izmir community played an important role in this wave of immigration. Three thousand of the immigrants, or about 8 per cent, had returned to Turkey. But some of them had already gone back to Israel again, and others were preparing to emigrate.

One result of the migration to Israel had been an exodus of the Jews from the smaller communities to Istanbul, because of a desire to avoid the isolation which they felt in smaller areas.

Community Organization

The year 1952-53 saw the election of a grand rabbi of Turkey, a post vacant for twenty-two years. During that period the statute of the Jewish community had been under revision, and the lay council, which conducted the affairs of the community, had no official status. In April 1950, by special authorization, the old council was renewed by cooptation. The mandate of this new council expired in May 1952. By the ministerial decree of May 29, 1952, in regard to the nomination of a grand rabbi of Turkey, the lay council was stripped of its powers. An electoral college, consisting of sixty-two delegates from the different parts of the country, chose between two candidates, one from Istanbul and one from Izmir. The Istanbul authorities took part in the ceremony at which the new grand rabbi, Raphael Saban, was installed. For the first time in the history of Turkish Judaism, the Turkish government authorized the community to send two delegates to the World Jewish Congress in Zurich. These delegates were Yusuf Salman and Marco Nasse.

The Jewish community suffered a serious loss in March 1953 through the death of Abrevaya Marmarali, president of the Jewish community of Turkey and former deputy.